CHRISTIANITY OF CHRISTIANS:

An Exegetical Interpretation of Matt. 5:13-16 And its Challenges to Christians in Nigerian Context.

ANTHONY I. EZEOGAMBA

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Published September 2019

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ISBN: 978 – 978 – 978 – 115 – 7

Printed and Published by

FIDES MEDIA LTD.
27 Archbishop A.K. Obiefuna Retreat/Pastoral Centre Road,
Nodu Okpuno, Awka South L.G.A., Anambra State, Nigeria
(+234) 817 020 4414, (+234) 803 879 4472, (+234) 909 320 9690
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DEDICATION

This Book is dedicated to my dearest mother, MADAM JUSTINA NKENYERE EZEOGAMBA in commemoration of what she did in my life and that of my siblings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the handiwork of God in my life who is the author of my being. I am grateful to Most Rev. Dr. S.A. Okafor, late Bishop of Awka diocese who gave me the opportunity to study in Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA) where I was armed to write this type of book. I appreciate the fatherly role of Bishop Paulinus C. Ezeokafor, the incumbent Bishop of Awka diocese together with his Auxiliary, Most Rev. Dr. Jonas Benson Okoye. My heartfelt gratitude goes also to Bishop Peter Ebele Okpalaeke for his positive influence in my spiritual life.

I am greatly indebted to my chief mentor when I was a student priest in CIWA and even now, Most Rev. Dr. Camillus Umoh, Catholic Bishop of Ikot Ekpene Diocese. Indeed, it was his tactful and gentle corrections in those days that made this book a reality. It is not also possible to forget the erudite touches I received in life from Rev. Fr. Prof. E. Nwaoru who was also my HOD in the Biblical Department when I was a student in CIWA. I am also highly indebted to Rev. Fr. Prof. Luke Ijezie for the role he played in my life when I was being formed in CIWA. I recognise the motherly role played in my life by Rev. Sr. Professor Teresa Okure, SHCJ who was during my last year in CIWA the immediate past Academic Dean of CIWA and immediate past HOD of Biblical Theology Department. I thank also Rev. Fr. Prof. F. Nwaigbo and Rev. Fr. Dr. Anthony Umoren for all their directions with regard to my graduation from CIWA.

I will not forget my dearest mother, Mrs Justina Ezeogamba, the families of my brothers (Emmanuel, John and Peter) and sisters (Carol and Chinyere); and my late father, Nze Charles

Ezeogamba, may his gentle soul rest in perfect peace Amen. I will not fell to thank Srs Chiazokam Ezeorah and Chijiudo Mbaji. I thank all priests from Achina especially Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Dim for the light with which they have been directing me. I will not forget my friends and senior colleagues in the priestly ministry especially Frs Christopher Okoli, Joel Okechukwu, Hilary Ezenwa, Chinedu Ezennabude, Anthony Akabogu, Emmanuel Okpalauwaekwe, John Umeorjiakor, Francis Ezenezi, Anthony Umeh, Luke Okoye, Raphael Agbanu and numerous others.

I remember the goodness I shared with the following during my stay in CIWA, Port Harcourt: Chief & Lolo C.U Mbaji, Sir and Lady Obiano KSJ, Sir and Lady Dr. Ben Okpala, Mr & Mrs Chubby Ezenwa, Mr. & Mrs Goddy Njoku, Mr. & Mrs Chika Umegekwe, Mr. & Mrs C.C. Ejimofor, Mr. & Mrs Iwunze, Mr. & Mrs Ekwommadu, Chief Archbong, Chief Ikeolisa, Sir and Lady Nwanaekezie, Madam Erika, Mr & Mrs Chinenye and host of others.

Finally, I am highly indebted to all my senior colleagues and mentors in my department namely Msgr. Prof. J.P.C. Nzomiwu, Prof. J.E. Madu, Fr. Prof. A.B.C. Chiegboka, Fr. Prof. C.A. Omeike as well as Rev. Sr. Prof. M.N.E Ezeh, and numerous other friends and well wishers. I thank God for you all; may God grant you all your deepest heart's desires. Amen.

Ezeogamba, I. Anthony.

FORWARD

The existence and furtherance of Christianity in Nigeria are threatened and hampered today more than ever. The threat from Islamic Jihad by Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen is worrisome. But more worrisome are shallow and lukewarm Christianity of Christians. Those are what threaten the existence and furtherance of Christianity most today. Shallow and lukewarm Christianity are expressive of Christianity that is not deeply rooted, that has no taproot, or that has no solid foundation. And like a house built upon sand easily collapses in the face of anything, even wind, that comes against it, so does shallow or lukewarm Christianity fizzle out in the face of any threat that comes against it.

Shallow and lukewarm Christianity leave no appreciable impact in society. In the face of endemic corruption, bad leadership, lack of value for human life, materialism, greed, covetousness, worldly pleasure, etc. prevalent in Nigeria, one wonders what impact Christians are making in the country. Jesus enjoined his followers to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). St. James says that faith without good works is dead (James 2:14-26). The Christian good works consist in living out the Christian principles and being truly Christian in season and out of season.

This book, Christianity of Christians: An Exegetical Interpretation of Matt. 5:13-16 and its Challenges to Christians in Nigerian Context, is the author's academic and scholarly investigation into the bible and into the life of Christians in Nigeria to know what being Christian really means and whether the life of Christians in Nigeria is in consonant with

that or not respectively. What he sets out to do in the book is well captured in the title of the book. The word 'Christianity' as employed in the title calls to mind the 'ought' and the 'is'. It calls to mind the 'ought' of Christianity as prescriptively stated in Matt. 5:13-16 and as interpreted and understood. That is, it calls to mind what being Christian really means or what a Christian really ought to be. It also calls to mind the Christianity of Christians in Nigeria; that is, the actual living out or otherwise of their Christian vocation by Christians in Nigeria.

Exegesis is a specialized discipline with technicalities that are in most cases neither fully meaningful to nor fully understood by the non-exeget. The author is able to satisfy his fellow exegets by the quality exegesis he carried out in the work as well as satisfy his non-exeget readers by simplifying most of the technicalities. The fruit of his exegesis derives more from the metaphor of salt and light in Matt. 5:13-16. He uses the fruits of his exegesis to establish what Christ expects his followers – the Christians – to be. He also uses them to establish the extent to which Christians in Nigeria are truly Christians and the extent they are not.

The book demonstrates the qualities of a good research work; it digs out more knowledge about the subject than previously known. What the book makes known about the objects or themes of Salt and Light shows that our knowledge of same is either inadequate, insufficient or no knowledge at all. The book, therefore, offers every one that reads it both the exeget and the non-exeget richer understanding of what it means to be salt and light in a way that invites and disposes the reader to strive to salt and light.

The book is both salt and light to the subjects and themes of Salt and Light. It is light because it has enlightened our understanding of the metaphorical use of salt and light in Matt. 5:13-16. It is also salt because it has made the call to be salt and light to be appetizing and appealing to us. A reading will convince you. This book has my highest commendation and recommendation to every Christian, both the minister and the ministered, the lecturer and the student.

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Old Testament Exegesis.

ABSTRACT

Matt. 5:13-16 is significant in the understanding of the Sermon on the Mount. It forms a transition from identifying those who are to live according to the demands of the Sermon on the Mount in the present (5:17-7:27) and those who will live the life of blessedness in the future (5:3-12). In this transitional passage, the audience is metaphorically identified as "The salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Using these metaphors to describe the audience draws attention to their usage in normal life situations. Equally, the metaphorical understanding of these elements both in biblical and social parlance is instructive. For instance, salt is a sign of covenant while light is a sign of orderliness and progress. Salt must lose its physical qualities before its preservative and flavouring effects could be noticed. In the same way, candle as source of light degenerates gradually as it gives its light till it burns itself out for the good of others. So when Jesus uses "salt" and "light" to refer to his disciples he means that they are to be to humanity what salt and light are. He urged his followers to become the salt and the light in the world that is hostile to God, lost in sin, ruined, and even depraved. This text was studied within the Nigerian Christian context. Within this context, there are so many Christians, and at the same time there are so many elements that tend to hinder the full realization of their Christian vocation of being salt and light, though not insurmountable. These elements are structurally imbedded in the socio-political, economic, and religious organization of Nigeria. These elements include double allegiance, bribery and corruption, etc. This book studied Matt 5: 13-16 in the context of Christians in Nigeria. It discusses the theological implications of being salt and light in the context of Nigeria. It established that Christians in Nigeria understand their worth as

"salt" and "light" to the Nigerian nation, but the only problem is the will-power to fulfil it despite the socio-cultural and political context of the nation, Nigeria. Hence, it affirms that there are societal and existential challenges to being salt and light, and that it is only by overcoming these challenges that Christians can truly be salt and light. That is, how they understand, relate, and respond to the challenges of this text in their day-to-day life within the prevalent context that determines their Christianity. The book discusses the theological implications of being salt and light in the context of Nigeria. The metaphor of salt and light, therefore, as applied to Christians from the metaphorical and theological perspectives signify that they must preserve the Nigerian nation and its people from the putrefying effects of hatred, violence, injustice and ethnocentrism. As salt and light Christians must purify and heal minds and hearts of corrupt and evil ways, and administer the life-giving Gospel message implied by the Sermon on the Mount to keep Nigeria and its people alive. Some of the recommendations we arrived at in this book among others include: Christians should rise to the challenge of Matt 5:13-16 in their environment no matter what; Salt and Light are encouraged to be used as Sacramental more than ever. Significantly, this work will be of immense assistance to Christians in Nigeria as well as Christians all over the world.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	-	Arewa Consultative Forum
Acts	-	Acts of the Apostles
BIB	-	Biblical
BTS	-	Bigard Theological Studies
CBQ	-	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBCN	-	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
1 Cor	-	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	-	2 Corinthians
C.M.S	-	Church Missionary Society
CMO	-	Catholic Men Organization
CWO	-	Catholic Women Organization
CYON	-	Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria
DG	-	Director General
Eph	-	Ephesians
FRSCN	-	Federal Road Safety Corps of Nigeria
Gal	-	Galatians
Gen	-	Genesis
GM	-	Gospel of Matthew
Jer	-	Jeremiah
JIT	-	Journal of Inculturation Theology
JSNTSup	-	Journal for the Study of New Testament Supplement Series
JTF	-	Joint Task Force
Isa	-	Isaiah
1 Kgs	-	1 Kings
LXX	-	Septuagint

Matt	-	Matthew
MASOB	-	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	-	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	-	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
Ms	-	Manuscript
Mss	-	Manuscripts
NDVF	-	Niger Delta Volunteer Force
NJT	-	The Nigerian Journal of Theology
NT	-	New Testament
NTA	-	New Testament Abstract
OPC	-	Oduduwa People's Congress
OT	-	Old Testament
OTA	-	Old Testament Abstract
PAACE	-	Pan African Association of Catholic Exegetes
Q	-	Quelle
RNC	-	Royal Niger Company.
Sig	-	Singular
SM	-	Sermon on the Mount
V	-	Verse
Vg	-	Vulgate
Vv	-	Verses

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

In biblical times, Israel as a nation had the responsibility of showing the light to other nations of the world since they were the chosen ones. Israel was basically united by their relationship with God through Abraham, Moses, Isaac and Jacob. This is reaffirmed by Isaiah who saw one of the major vocations of Israel as being the "Light to the nations" (Isa 42:6; 49:6). The implication of this is that, through them the nations shall know and do the will of God. It is this God-given vocation that all the prophets continually reminded Israel in the Old Testament (OT). But the experience of the exile and persistent warnings against idolatry show that Israel was not able to fulfil this vocation creditably.

In the New Testament (NT), Jesus fulfils this vocation of Israel when he identifies himself as the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5) in whose presence all those who sit in darkness experience great light (Matt 4:16; cf. Isa 9:2). It is as light that Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee. Jesus also describes his followers not only as the light of the world but also as the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13-16). This metaphor makes it clear that Jesus intends that his followers fulfil the function of being light and salt to the world. Within the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this intention is clearly spelt out when Jesus challenges his disciples to a new way of life in line with the principles of the kingdom, marked by a new righteousness (Matt 4:25-5:2; 7:28-29).

Just as in the physical world, where light dispels darkness, shows the way, prevents people from falling, brings about orderliness and makes visible what is hidden, so it is in the

theological sphere. In biblical tradition light has always been seen as a symbol of orderliness and the absence of confusion. On its part, salt purifies and restores contaminated things (2 Kings 2:20-22). It functions as preservative, irritates wounds, adds flavour to food, and induces thirst. Salt in biblical tradition is also a symbol of the covenant (2 Chron. 13:5) of wisdom (Mark 9:50; Col. 4:6), and of unity (Exod. 30:34-35; Psalm 133). 'Covenant of salt' symbolizes peace and friendship (Ezra 4:14).

What light and salt are to life is what Christ challenges his followers[1] to become for the world and earth respectively. The kingdom of God is about this world and about our life and witness in the world. It is about politics, economics and culture. It is about our environment, and its preservation. It is about peace. Followers of Christ are to fulfil their responsibility as light and salt in the society in which they live. Jesus therefore expects his followers to lead the way in the realization of righteousness and unity in the world. It is the disciples' faithfulness to the new righteousness brought and taught by Jesus (Matt 5-7; 28: 19-20) that justifies the existence of Christians in the world including Nigeria of our time. The implication is that when Christians are on the throne, unity and justice should prevail.

The Nigerian socio-cultural, political and economic contexts present numerous challenges for Christians in their struggle to live by those gospel values characterized by the new righteousness. For instance, Christians live in Nigeria which is counted as one of the most corrupt nations of the world or a

[1] Disciples or followers of Jesus were called 'Christians' for the first time at Antioch (Acts 11:26). Therefore in this book, any where we mention 'Disciples' or 'Followers of Jesus' we mean 'Christians.'

nation where nepotism, ethnicism, and selfishness thrive. Within the Nigerian context, there is no denying the fact that there are bribery and corruption, kidnappings, political killings, sexual immorality, drug counterfeiters, malpractices of all sorts, election frauds, tribal conflicts, ethnic marginalization, double allegiance, the list is endless.

When one, therefore, considers the number of Christian denominations and sects, number of Christians with their religious ministers of various ranks, the number of Christians in government, and in business, as well as Christians in other professions and vocations, the number of crusades going on in various sections of the country on daily basis, one expects the Nigerian society and the Nigerian nation to be imbued with righteousness. On the contrary the nation and its society is filled with all manner of vices practiced and carried out to the degree of abnormality. One has no option than to ask if Christians in Nigeria understand and live by Christ's injunctions in Matt 5:13-16 where he says, "You are the light of the world . . . . You are the salt of the earth . . . ."

This book aims at studying Matt 5: 13-16 in the context of Christians in Nigeria to know whether Christians in Nigeria understand their worth as "Salt" and "Light" to the Nigerian nation that is daily making backward movement towards anonymity and ignobility. This context is primarily determined by the religious, socio-cultural, political, and economic situation of Nigeria. The book therefore aims at investigating how Christians in Nigeria understand, relate, and respond to the challenges of Matt 5:13-16 in their day-to-day life within the prevalent context. The investigation is scientifically carried out through what is available in prints, what is observable and what is obtained through consultation of some experts. In a nutshell, the book questions the Christianity of Christians in

Nigeria. How can there be a Christian leader in any strata of government, civil service, or traditional stool and yet bribery and corruption, nepotism, ethnicism, embezzlement of public fund, inflation of contract sum, kidnapping, armed robbery, and the like are still the order of the day.

Methodologically, the writer employs methods that are necessary to bring out the meaning of the text since the text we are dealing with is part of the New Testament which passed through almost three stages before it came to us namely: from Jesus himself, to the first century Christians i.e. as it was used by them, and as it came to be used by the various evangelists. The writer therefore employs principally the Historical Critical Method (HCM) which exposes us to the historical context of a given text. This method allows us to examine our text in its historical and theological dimensions.[2] This method provides us with the background information of the text like the authorship of the gospel and its provenance, its sources, the events, date, persons, and places mentioned or implied in the text. Through textual criticism the authenticity and integrity of the text is established. HCM equally helps us to discover and analyze the structure of the text and to study its literary genre.
Apart from the HCM, the writer also employs the contextual method which enables us to situate the text within its biblical context and in the Nigerian context. For this reason this work is augmented with what I have observed personally and the view of some experts in their various fields. All these enable us to make a valid interpretation of Matt 5:13-16.
This book argues that if the text of Matt 5:13-16 is properly understood and lived among the Christians in Nigeria as it was

[2] Gerald Downing "Historical Critical Method" in R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden Eds. *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1990)285.

understood and accepted by the community of Matthew then there is every possibility that Christians in Nigeria would always feel challenged to live up to the vocation of being "Salt" and "Light" as followers of Christ despite all odds. A proper understanding of the metaphorical meaning of "Salt" and "Light" in the text of Matt 5:13-16 could lead to revolution in the moral and spiritual life of Christians in Nigeria as well as in the whole nation. Hence, the Christianity of Christians would no longer be doubted. It will therefore be crystally clear that there are authentic Christians in Nigeria.

This book is limited to the study and interpretation of Matt 5:13-16 within the Nigerian Christian context and by extension in the context of the Nigerian nation as whole. Other relevant biblical texts as they affect the issue in question are discussed where necessary. Nigeria as a nation has three main ethnic groups namely Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Other numerous ethnic groups are in the minority and there are Christ's followers in all of them. Nigeria is chosen because it has appreciable number of Christians coupled with the fact that the writer is a Christian minister who was "born and bred" in Nigeria and still resides in Nigeria, teaching and ministering. The implication of this important fact is that the author knows Nigeria well, and as a citizen has travelled widely in it, hence participant observation is part of the methodology.

Significantly, this book will be of great benefit to all Christians especially those who are struggling to live out their Christian vocation of being "Salt" and "Light." It will also be useful for Christian leaders who are daily challenged to adequately proclaim the reality of being "Salt" and "Light" in an environment with negative tendencies as we have enumerated above.

Related to the above, this book will most certainly help every Christian in Nigeria to assess his or her "Saltness" and "Lightness" as well as his or her ability to show others how to live a life devoid of darkness and insipidness in his or her day to day life as a Christian, bearing in mind the consequences when one is not living according to one's vocation.

1.1. Understanding Some Key Words as it Affects the Christianity of Christians:

Here the author defines some terms that are pertinent for a proper understanding of the entire work. Such terms include:

1.1.1 *Christianos* - Christians: Jesus in order to universalize his message started his ministry by calling some people to be his followers. The intention was to make them his disciples so that they will in turn make others their fellow disciples (Matt. 10:1-5). It is these disciples and those they have converted that were designated Christians after the ascension of Jesus. The implication is that Christ never addressed them by this name. So immediately this name was born in Antioch it became like an irreplaceable tag on them. Thus, this term became widely used right from the early period of the Church to the present day to identify the followers of Jesus Christ. This name appears only three times in the whole of the New Testament; twice in Acts of Apostles (11:26; 26:28) and once in the First Letter of Peter (4:16).

This name historically was given to the followers of Jesus Christ by those who were outside the community of believers (Acts 11:26) as well as in Acts 26:28 where it was used sarcastically by King Agrippa so as to chide Paul. That is, the name was not what the followers of Jesus Christ gave to themselves but what they received derogatorily because they were behaving like Christ. The name in actual fact presents

them as people who belong to Christ (1 Peter 4:16). Hence, if you belong to Christ you should not be ashamed to suffer for him or answer that name boldly. Peter says, "Yet, if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name" (1 Peter 4:16). It was Donald Senior who said, "It is wonderfully ironic that a name begun in derision and perhaps often used by those who inflicted violence on the Christian community would become for the disciples of Jesus themselves a term that aptly expresses the essence of Christian faith, namely belonging to Jesus."[3] Jesus did not call them Christians instead he named them "Salt of the earth" and "Light of the world." If the light of the early followers of Christ were not shinning to the amazement of Antiocheans, they would not have identified them as Christians.

1.1.2. Halas (Salt)

Salt is the translation of the Greek words: *hals, halos* (m) and *halas, halatos* (n).[4] The exact opposite of *halas* is *analos* "lack of salt" or "saltless" (Mark 9:50). *Halas* is the late form of *hals* and is used metaphorically in Matt 5:13b and Mark 9:50a. Literally, salt can be defined as a dietary mineral composed primarily of sodium chloride (NaCl) that is essential for animal life, but toxic to most land plants. Salt flavour is one of the basic tastes, an important preservative and a popular food seasoning.[5] It is a chemical compound belonging to the larger class of salts; salt in its natural form as a crystalline

[3] Donald Senior, "Christian" in Carroll Stuhlmueller (ed.) The Collegevill Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology (Minnesota: The Liturgical press, 1996) 133.

[4] Johannes P. Louw, & Eugene Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains (2nd ed.) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989) 52.

[5] Salt- Wikipedia, en.m.wikipedia.org. 28/05/2009.

mineral is known as rock salt or halite. Salt is essential for life in general, and saltiness is one of the basic human tastes. Salt is one of the oldest and most ubiquitous food seasonings and salting is an important method of food preservative.[6] It is seen physically as a white crystalline object or substance. In this literal sense, "salt has its effect only because, and for as long as, it has a distinctive saltiness."[7] In the same vein, Salt is very important to human beings as well as to animals (Isa 30:24) and hence very popular to the extent that no one could claim ignorance of it. It is practically in every home as table salt hence the question, "Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?" (Job 6:6). The salt we mean here is the normal salt one uses daily in meals with its normal effects in meals. One is called at this point to imagine the level of acceptability of food without salt.

Halas (salt) is used metaphorically of believers in Matt 5:13a and Mark 9:50b to describe the character and responsibility of believers. It also mediates the wisdom exhibited in the speech of the believers (Col 4:6). This metaphorical usage points to the spiritual health and vigour essential to Christian virtue and counteractive of the corruption that is in the world.[8] According to Strong's Concordance, there are forty-one references to salt in the Bible, the earliest being the story of Lot's wife (Gen 9:45).

In this book, therefore, we take salt to be a white substance that is pure and admits of no impurity. And as that which does not act in isolation of what it is preserving, adding flavour to, or

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[6] Salt- Wikipedia, en.m.wikipedia.org. 08/08/2018.

[7] R. T. France The Gospel of Matthew, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2007) 172.

[8] W.E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1997) 987.

purifying. That means, it has to be mixed with the food or meat as the case may be and in most cases "it looses itself" but even when it looses itself physically, its effect remains. This is an everyday experience with table salt. This is what Christ has in mind when he describes his followers as "Salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13a).

1.1.3. *Phōs* and *Phōtos* (Light)

Light is the translation of Greek words: *phōs* and *phōtos*. Scientifically, when one talks of the noun light, one means, "the band of electromagnetic radiation between the wave lengths 3,800 angstrom units and 7,600 angstrom units, to which the retina of the eye is sensitive and which the brain interprets."[9] Anything beyond the above range is beyond human retina. That is exactly what comes to the mind of a scientist any time light is mentioned. In biblical tradition however, light has both literal and symbolic meanings. In the literal sense, it means, daylight, sunlight, brightness, shining, the lights themselves - lamps. So in the literal sense light is not just a medium of sight but also its object.[10] Thus, literally light brings about visibility. Its absence results in unimaginable situations. Mobility is reduced to the barest minimum in the absence of light. So in this sense, light is indispensable to human existence in the world. In a symbolic sense, light is a symbol of happiness (Job 22:28; Psalm 97:11), protection (Job 29:3; Isa. 58:8), orderliness (Gen. 1:3; Amos 5:20), exemplary life (Matt. 5:14a; Luke 2:32), salvation (Psalm 27:1; Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79), prosperity, joy and good fortune (Esther 8:16; Isa 60:20).

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[9] The New Webster's Dictionary 573.

[10] Conzelmann, "*Phôs*" in The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol IX (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1979) 987.

God is the source of light and for that reason; God's face is the light that has to shine for us to be saved (Psalm 139:12). God is the sovereign Lord of light and darkness (Amos 5:8); and light is his garment (Psalm 104:2); hence, in his light we see light (Psalm 36:9). Therefore, to describe someone as light means that that person is one who leads out of darkness, one who abhors darkness in all its ramifications, shows the way, is exemplary, is sight to the blind, one whose absence brings about chaos and anarchy and one whose presence dispels vices and all negative tendencies.

1.1.4. Gē (Earth)

Scientifically, there are nine planets. The 'Earth' is the third planet from the Sun with an orbital period of 365.26days, with a diameter of 12,756km/ 7,926mi, and an average distance from the sun of 149,6000,000km/93,000,000mi. The earth is surrounded by an atmosphere composed primarily of Nitrogen, and Oxygen, it is the only planet in the universe known to support life (Acts 22:22).[11] From the point of view of earth supporting life, science and biblical tradition have convergence ideas but in terms of its existence and sustenance they differ remarkably.

In the OT, the Hebrew word *'eres* is what the English translates as "earth"[12] and "land." In OT *'eres* can be rendered as earth, land, ground or country (Gen 10: 10), territory, district (Gen 19:28), region; tribal territory (Deut 34:2); smaller territories (1 Sam 9:4, 5); piece of ground (Gen 23:15); specific lands (Gen 11:31; 12:1, 5, 6, 7). Hence in a number of passages the choice

[11] Microsoft Encarta 2009, Microsoft Corporation.

[12] Dwight Moody Smith, "The World" The Harper's Bible Dictionary (Bangalore; Theological Pub. 1994) 1141.

between the translation "earth" or "land" is a difficult one.[13] The references to the earth, land, region, district or territories are in relation to the habitation of human beings. Within this tradition, earth is seen as part of the world, in some instances, one can stand in place of the other. It stands in the OT as the land of the living.

In the NT ***gē*** stands for the Hebrew word *'eres*. "The word ***gē*** is restricted to the totality of solid land, which is thought of as a single unit surrounded by and resting on the sea" (Acts 4:24; 14:15; Rev 10:6; 14:7; 21:1).[14] The NT recognizes the Earth as a creature of God (Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24), and it belongs to him (1 Cor 10:26). If God owns the earth, it then means that God is the Lord of the earth as well as heaven (Matt 11:25; Rev 11:4). The earth, therefore, is a place where the power of God and of Jesus as the messiah is manifested (Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). God as the supreme Lord of the earth, shares this power with Jesus. Thus, the earth becomes the place of Jesus' assignment (John 17:4). Hence, he came to cast fire on earth as well as division (Luke 12:49, 51). In Matthew's gospel, he presents himself as one who came not to bring peace to the earth but sword (Matt 10:34). In the view of Janzen, the earth,

> As the battle field between God and Satan, the earth becomes the arena of human probation; the scene of either obedience or disobedience. The pervasiveness of the later, in turn makes the earth the target of God's judgment and salvation, especially through the agency of Jesus, the Messiah. The adjective 'earthly' (epigeios) often designating anything located on

[13] Janzen, W. "Earth", Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 3. (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 245.

[14] Hermann Sesse, *"Gē Epigeios"* The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 1(Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1979) 678.

> the earthly plane of the universe (Phil 2:10), can consequently also refer to that which is the opposite of what is heavenly (1 Cor 15:40; 2 Cor 5:1; Phil 3:19).[15]

From the context of Matt 5:13 "Earth" stands for the inhabitants of the earth whose lives are not oriented towards the will of God i.e., humanity outside the "reign of God." It is a synecdoche which is the practice of using a part to refer to a whole or vice-versa. In the case of Matt 5:13, earth stands for a portion of the earth i.e., humanity outside the reign of God. It does not include plants and animals or other material part of the earth though they are taken care of.[16] It is a place where godlessness, nepotism, tribalism, bribery and corruption, ethnicism, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these (Gal. 5: 19-21) are at home.

1.1.5. Kosmos (World)

In biblical tradition, the word kosmos is translated by the English word "World" and it stands for "Human society organizing itself without God. What Jesus does for the world is to send out his disciples into it, in order to lead it back to God and to make it aware of God".[17] The world is the object of God's salvation in Christ (John 3:16; 12:47). It is created by God through Christ (1:3, 10). This same world apart from Christ stands under judgment (John 16:8-11). Jesus' followers

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[15] Janzen 247.

[16] This is also seen in Matt 10:38, "And whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me." "Cross" here stands in for a whole range of self-sacrificial acts.

[17] William Barclay, The Gospel of John, Vol. 2. The Daily Study Bible (Bangalore: Theological Publications, 1999) 214.

are not of the world and hence are hated by the world (John 17:18). Jesus' followers are urged to have nothing to do with the world, especially not to live according to the standard of the world or to love it (1 John 2:15-17). Even at that, Jesus never prayed for his followers to be taken out of the world but prayed for them so that they may convert the world (John 17:9-19). It is about this world that Jesus urged his followers that they become the 'light of' (Matt 5:14). It is also this world that the risen Christ compelled his followers to make his followers/disciples (Matt 28:19).[18]

In the Pauline tradition, the world is the arena in which sin alienates people from God and his reign. Therefore, "The world is a shorthand way of referring to the totality of humanity in the bondage of sin. This bondage is not a permanent condition, for through God's action in Christ the form of this world is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31)."[19] Therefore Christians are not to conform to the standard of this world (Rom 12:2). In the world, there is a power which is in opposition to God, and that is the power the followers of Jesus are being asked to confront and remain resolute in living out their faith.

So, in the context of Matt 5:14 *Kosmos* means mankind that is hostile to God, lost in sin, ruined, and even depraved. Put in another way, humanity that organizes itself outside God. It also mean the same thing in the following passages of the NT: John 7:7; 8:23; 12:31; 15:18f; 16:33; 17:25; 18:36; 1 Cor 2:12; 3:19; 11:32; 2 Cor. 5:19; Gal 6:14; James 1:27; 1 John 4:17. In the context of Matt 5:14 the world is used as a synecdoche. The world refers to the inhabitants of the world who live in

[18] Smith, 1142.
[19] Smith, 1142.

opposition to the commandments of God which are summarized as: the love of God and love of neighbour (Luke 10:25-28). So the "world" as used by Jesus in Matt 5:14 stands for only the inhabitants of the world and not including other beings or things created by God in the world as such.[20] In the opinion of this book, both the earth and the world mean the same thing. Earth can comfortably stands for the world and vice versa.

1.2. Brief History of Nigeria as it Affects Christians

The amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914 by Fredrick Lugard gave rise to Nigeria as a colony of Britain. After forty six years of colonial rule, Nigeria was declared as an independent state on Oct 1, 1960. This was through the tireless effort of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Belawa and Awolowo. Nigeria has a total area of 923,768Km^2. It lies at the extreme inner corner of the Gulf of Guinea, and is the largest geo-political unit in West Africa. The country is located between parallels 4^0 and 14^0 North - entirely within the tropical zone, and occupies a position where the western parts of the African continent meet equatorial Africa.[21] According to 2018 UN estimate, Nigeria's population stands at 196,573,875. Nigerian population is equivalent to 2.57% of the total world population. Nigeria ranks seventh in the list of countries by population. The population density in Nigeria is 215 per km^2. The total land area of Nigeria is 910770 km^2 (351,650 square miles). 51.0% of the Nigerian population is urban (99,967,871). It is good to note also that

[20] For example, when John says, "God so loved the world" (John 3:16), his reference is not to the created world as a whole but only to human beings.

[21] Eluwa, G.I.C; Ukagwu, M.O.; Nwachukwu, J.U.N.; Nwaubani, A.C.N. A History of Nigeria For Schools and Colleges (Onitsha: African-First, 2005) ix.

the median age in Nigeria today is 17.9 years.[22] Nigeria is a growing population. Nigeria extends northward from the coastline for some 1,170 km. From the western border to the east, there is a distance of 1, 260km at the widest part. The country extends in the south from the Atlantic Ocean which washes the coastline for about 900km to the Sahara Desert in the North. Nigeria is bounded on the West by the Republic of Niger. On the east, Nigeria share a border with the Republic of Cameroon.[23] Nigeria practices federal system of government.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory located at Abuja. These 36 states and a Federal capital are further divided into 774 Local Government Areas.[24] Nigeria is a pluralistic society and by all standards is reckoned as African's most populous country. Because of insincerity of the government both at local, state and federal levels the population of Nigeria cannot be ascertained. All we have said above cannot be substantiated. It is this insincerity of leaders that makes it impossible to have a well ordered capturing department that takes care of number of births and deaths in Nigeria.[25] Nigeria remains a society rich in cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic and political diversity. Hence, it is made up of about 250 different ethnic groups[26] with three dominant religions namely Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR). Well, "in terms of Nigeria's major

[22] Nigerian Population (2018) - Worldometers, www.worldometers.info. Retrieved on 20th August, 2018.

[23] Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu, Nwaubani, ix.

[24] Johnson Olawale, List of Local Government Areas in each state of Nigeria (www.naija.ng). Retrieved on 20th August, 2018.

[25] Saliu Iyanda "The Falsification of Population Results" Sunday Champion 20/02 (Jan. 14, 2007) 15-18.

[26] Nigerian Embassy, http://www.nigeriaembassyusa.org/history.shtml. Retrieved on 17th March, 2010.

ethnic groups' religious affiliations, the Hausa ethnic group in the North is mostly Muslim, the West which is the Yoruba tribe is divided among mainly Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions, while the Igbos of the East and the Ijaw in the South are predominantly Christians."[27] The struggle for supremacy amongst these three dominant religions has launched Nigeria into several religious riots and conflicts in the past and present.

Hence, Nigeria is seen as a home of a variety of religions which tend to vary regionally. As we have said above, Southeast has the highest concentration of Christianity, while Islam thrives mostly in the North; central region tends to be religiously divided. On the other hand, ATR is always in the minority wherever it is still thriving in the country. Some analysts put the population of various religions in Nigeria thus: Christians 51.9%; Islam 47.3% and ATR or other religions 0.8%.[28] This exposition tells us that greater percentage of Nigerians are Christians.
Christians in Nigeria are about evenly split between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

With the discovery of oil in Nigeria at Oloibiri, a small village in the Delta region of the country around 1956, other money yielding ventures were dropped gradually until at the close of the Nigerian civil war in 1970, Nigeria's economic sector became highly dependent on oil. Today oil has become the mainstay of Nigerian economy.[29] As a result of the above,

[27]Religion in Nigeria - Wikipedia en.m.wikipedia.org. Retrieved on 20th August, 2018.

[28] Religion in Nigeria – Wikipedia. (en.m.wikipeia.org). Retrieved on 06/02/2019.

[29] John Wangbu "Environmental and Social Cost of Oil in Nigeria: Niger Delta Agitation For Justice Vis-à-vis Principles of Catholic Social

Nigeria "is the largest petroleum producer in Africa, the sixth largest producer in the world and largest producer of sweet (almost sulphur free) crude oil among OPEC member countries. Yet the effect of this God given blessing is not felt anywhere except among the political class, because of poor management or poor leadership.[30] But outside oil, Nigeria has a wide array of underexploited mineral resources which include natural gas, coal, bauxite, tantalite, gold, tin, iron ore, limestone, niobium, lead and zinc.[31] That Nigeria is a rich country is widely attested by a certain General who once says, Nigerian's problem was not how to get money but what to do with it.[32] This general, no doubt, is one of the Christians that ruled Nigeria in the past. One wonders whether such a statement should be coming from a Christian leader. From then till today, Nigerians travel abroad for medical treatment, good education and even for greener pastures yet one of her former Christian leaders made the above assertion in those days.

The quantity of oil and gas wealth Nigeria has provides her with both political and economic clout.[33] Despite the oil wealth which Nigeria has, it cannot boast of any meaningful development as a result of corruption in almost all quarters of

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Teachings" in *Niger Delta, Rich Region Poor People* (Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 2005) 1-27.

[30]Toluwanimi Olujimi "The Chinua Achebe Foundation Interview Series" in the Vanguard 22/6060 (Monday, May 1, 2006) 41-44.

[31]The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*:* http://books.google.com/books. Retrieved on 2008-12-26.

[32]David Wodu, Nigeria the Backward March (No publication data, July 2006) 6.

[33] Oliver A. Opara-nadi, "The Place of Religion and Conflict Management in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria - Analysis of the Role of Churches" in The Church and the Politics of Resource Control (Port Harcourt: CIWA, 2006) 20.

her government. Oil which is supposed to be a blessing to the Nigerian nation turns out to be her bane; for it is through it that the multinational companies have manipulated the Nigerian leaders made them corrupt and turned them against their brothers and sisters. No wonder, Chinua Achebe opines, "There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership."[34] What that means is that Nigeria has all it takes naturally to be not only the giant of Africa but one of the most prominent nations of the world. Yet, "Today, the average Nigerian struggles hard to make ends meet; sees himself or herself as being poorer than he or she was a decade ago; and finds it hard to be hopeful that things will get better soon."[35] All these are products of bad administration and mismanagement of God given natural and human resources.

Ethnocentricism, tribalism, and sectarianism (especially religious) have played a visible role in Nigerian politics since after her independence. Hence, Nigeria has witnessed several inter-ethnic cum religious conflicts which include: disturbances in Zaria during which properties belonging to many Christians were destroyed (May 1, 1980), Warri (involving the Isekiris, Urhobos and Ijaws), Ife-Modakeke, Zangon-Kataf, Umuleri – Aguleri, Tiv-Jukun, Ogoni, the explosion over Sharia in Kaduna and Aba/Umuahia, Niger Delta Crisis.[36] Oil, the

[34]Chinua Achebe, The Trouble with Nigeria. (Taiwan: AI- United Industries & Shipping Inc., 1985) 1.

[35] Godwin Chukwudum Nwaobi**,** Corruption And Bribery In The Nigerian Economy. (htt://odeas/re[ec/prg/p/wpa/wuwppe/0404006.html, 2004). Retrieved on 10/5/2010

[36]Opara-nadi 24.

natural endowment of Nigerian nation as well as religious differences are responsible either directly or indirectly for the above recorded conflicts.

Nigeria's human rights record remains poor and government officials at all levels continue to commit serious abuses especially the police and military. One calls to mind here various extrajudicial killings, abuses like arbitrary arrests, prolonged pre-trial detention which goes beyond the 48 hours prescribed in the 1999 constitution, judicial corruption and executive influence on the judiciary, rape, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners, human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution and forced labour, child abuse, child sexual exploitation and so many other vices.[37]

In 2009 alone, most Nigerian magazines and News Papers have such headlines as: "30 years of Religious Crises: The losses and the pains"; "Our Constitution is a Fallacy."[38] "How Pastors Rob Church Members"; "I'm Frustrated" (the DG of EFCC).[39] "Overdraft Billionaires: Many of Nigerian's super-rich are also super debtors, revelations by Nigeria's apex bank have shown"; "Fight to the Finish in Anambra"; "Farewell to Arms: Road to Peace in Niger Delta."[40] "Corruption: Nigeria's rating plunges, ranked 130th",[41]. This headline implies that

[37] United States, Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2009-02-25. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119018.htm. Retrieved on 2009-03-20.

[38] Newswatch, Nigerian's Weekly Magazine, Nov. 2, 2009.

[39] The News 32/23, 15 June, 2009.

[40] The News 33/15, 19 October, 2009.

[41] Omoh Gabriel, Business Editor (http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/11/17/corruption-nigerias-rating-plunges-ranked-130th.

Nigeria drops from 121st position on Transparency International's rating in 2008 to 130th in 2009. "Transparency International: Nigeria's Banking Sector Corrupt."[42] "Hundreds feared dead over religious unrest in Nigeria.[43] "TIMELINE-Ethnic and religious unrest in Nigeria."[44] You can imagine

[42]Thisday, (http://nigerianbulletin.com/summary-plus-news/transparency-international. Retrieved Sept. 25 2009

[43] Anne Penketh (htt://www.indepent.co.uk) Tuesday, 11 September 2001. Retrieved 17 June 2009.

[44]Reuters.com.Website: Feb 21, 2009 (Reuters) - At least three people were killed and churches and mosques set ablaze in the Nigerian city of Bauchi on Saturday, close to where clashes between religious gangs killed hundreds of people last November. Following is a timeline of major religious and ethnic violence in recent years in Africa's most populous nation, divided into at least 200 distinct ethnic groups and about evenly split between Muslims and Christians: 2000 - Thousands of people are killed throughout northern Nigeria as non-Muslims opposed to the introduction of strict Islamic sharia law fight with Muslims who demand its implementation in the northern state of Kaduna. Sept. 2001 - Christian-Muslim violence flares after Muslim prayers in Jos, with churches and mosques set on fire. According to a September 2002 report by a panel set up by Plateau state government, at least 915 people are killed in days of rioting. Nov. 2002 - Nigeria decides to abandon the Miss World contest in Abuja. At least 215 people die in rioting in the northern city of Kaduna following a newspaper article suggesting the Prophet Mohammad would probably have married one of the Miss World beauty queens if he were alive today. May 2004 - Hundreds of people, mostly Muslim Fulanis, are killed by Christian Tarok militia in the central Nigerian town of Yelwa. Survivors say they buried 630 corpses. Police say "hundreds" were killed. -- Muslim and Christian militants fight bloody street battles later the same month in the northern city of Kano. Christian community leaders say 500-600 people, mostly Christians, were killed in the two days of rioting by Muslims. Feb. 2006 - A week of rioting by Muslim and Christian mobs claims at least 157 lives. The violence begins in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, when a Muslim protest against Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad runs out of control. Revenge attacks follow in the south. Nov. 2008 - Clashes between Muslim and Christian gangs triggered by a disputed local government chairmanship election kill at least 400 people in the central city of Jos.

what happens in a country where the above headlines dominate the day. As they affect this book, they are all happening in a country where Christian(s) must live and practice Christianity. Are they part of the problem or are they part of the solution?
In fact the situation in Nigeria is best described by this wonderful prayer composed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in 1998 against injustice, bribery and corruption in Nigeria which we know touches all sectors. The prayer:

> Father in Heaven, you always provide for all your creatures so that all may live as you have willed. You have blessed our country Nigeria with rich human and natural resources to be used to your honour and glory and for the well being of every Nigerian. We are deeply sorry for the wrong use of these your gifts and blessing through acts of injustice, bribery and corruption, as a result of which many of our people are hungry, sick, ignorant and defenceless. Father, you alone can heal us and our nation of this sickness. We beg you; touch our lives and the lives of our leaders and people so that we may all realize the evil effect of bribery and corruption and work hard to eliminate it. Raise up for us God-fearing people and leaders who care for us and who will lead us in the path of peace, prosperity and progress.

The content of the above prayer and indeed all that we have said above have a lot to reveal about the situation Christians must remain in and make their influence felt in Nigeria. It is really the picture of the nation that houses Christians.

These are the presidents that have ruled Nigeria and their religion as well as their denomination from 1960 till 2019.

S/N	Name of the President	Year he ruled	Religion	Christian Denomination
1	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Prime Minister)	01/10/1960-01/10/1963. (3 years)	Muslim	
2	*Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Governor General)	01/10/1960-01/10/1963 (3 years)	Christian	Anglican
3	*Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	01/10/1963-16/01/1966 (3 years)	Christian	Anglican
4	Aguiyi Ironsi	16/01/1966-29/07/1966. (6 months)	Christian	Anglican
5	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	01/08/1966-29/07/1975 (9 years)	Muslim	Anglican
6	Gen. Murtala Muhammed	29/07/1975-13/02/1976 (7 months)	Muslim	
7	*Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	13/02 1976-01/10/1979 (3 years)	Christian	Anglican
8	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	01/10/1979-31/12/1983 (4 years)	Muslim	
9	*Gen. Muhammadu Buhari	31/12/1983-27/08/1985 (2 years)	Muslim	

10	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	27/08/1985-26/08/1993 (8 years)	Muslim	
11	Chief Ernest Shonekan	26/08/1993-17/11/1993 (3 Months)	Christian	Anglican
12	Gen. Sani Abacha	17/11/1993-08/06/1998 (5 years)	Muslim	
13	Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar	08/06/1998-29/05/1999 (11 Months)	Muslim	
14	*Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	29/05/1999-29/05/2007 (8 years)	Christian	Anglican
15	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	29/05/2007-05/05/2010 (3years)	Muslim	
16	Goodluck Jonathan	05/05/2010-28/05/2015 (5 years)	Christian	Anglican
17	*Gen. Muhammadu Buhari	28/05/2015-till date (4 years?)	Muslim[45]	

From the above table, out of the seventeen leaders who have led Nigeria, one was a prime minister. Again, from 1960 till date, three presidents namely Azikiwe, Obasanjo and Buhari led the country first as Governor General, Military heads and eventually as democratically elected leaders. Azikiwe and Tafawa Belewa led Nigeria together between 1960 and 1963,

[45]Victor Ogunyinka, "Nigeria @57: Past And Present Presidents From October 1, 1960" in Nigerian Tribune. Wwwtribuneonlineng.com. Retrieved on 06/02/2019.

where one was the Prime Minister and the other the Governor General. Putting that into consideration, from 1960 till date, Nigeria has had fourteen leaders. Out of these fourteen leaders, six were Christians and they include: Nnandi Azikiwe 1960-1966 (he doubled as both the Governor General of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963 and as the first President of Nigeria from 1963-1966)- Anglican; Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi- Anglican (1966); General Yakubu Gowon - Anglican (1966-1975); General Olusegun Obasanjo- Anglican (1976-1979); Ernest Shonekan -Anglican (1993); General Olusegun Obasanjo - Anglican (1999-2007); Goodluck Jonathan - Anglican (2010-2015).[46] From the above revelation, no Catholic has ever ruled Nigeria; those Christians who have ruled Nigeria are all Protestants. Furthermore, there has never been even any Catholic who had ever served this country as a vice president. Any curious observer will discover that though we have more people from a particular section of the country namely the north that have ruled this country from 1963 till date, but in all, Christians have ruled this country more than Muslims when it comes to number of years; and no member of African Traditional Religion has ruled this country. Again from the first republic till now, Abubaka Bukola Saraki is the only Muslim who has been elected as Senate President, all others were Christians and they include Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dennis Osadebay, Nwafor Orizu, Joseph Wayas, Iyorchia Ayu, Ameh Ebute, Evan Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo, Anyim Pius Anyim, Adolphus Wabara, Ken Nnamani, David Mark and finally Abubaka Bukola Saraki, the incumbent.[47]

[46]Justin Findlay, Worldatlas (www.worldatlas.com) updated on April 25, 2017. Retrieved on 20/08/2018.

[47]List of Nigerian Leaders and their Religion, https://www.nairaland.com. Retrieved on 20th August, 2018.

Without mincing words, it seems to be a fact that as Nigeria is growing in population, so is her poverty level growing. 86.9 million Nigerians now are living in extreme poverty. This figure represents nearly 50% of estimated population of Nigeria. It is now being argued in some quarters that Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world. It is even predicted that Nigeria will become the world's third largest country by 2050. Hence, "The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to end extreme poverty by 2030 is unlikely to be met - no thanks, in large part, to Nigeria."[48] Yomi Kazeem went on to say,

> A new report by the World Poverty Clock shows Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world. India has a population seven times larger than Nigeria's. The struggle to lift more citizens out of extreme poverty is an indictment on successive Nigerian governments which have mismanaged the country's vast oil riches through incompetence and corruption.[49]

The implications of all these information question the Christianity of Christians who had been or are still in leadership in Nigeria today (at all levels of government). It is not an exaggeration to declare at this stage that Christians are part and parcel of what is happening in Nigeria today. That they had equal or rather more opportunities to change the lot of this country, to make it a country where justice, peace, communalism and convivialism are at home but never did that. Hence the question, are they insipid Christians?

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[48]Yomi Kazeem, Nigeria Has The Highest Rate of Extreme Poverty, Quartz Africa (qz.com) Retrieved on 23rd August, 2018.

[49] Kazeem, Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO THE TEXT
Authentication of the Uniqueness of this Book

Here the author studies some relevant literature that are written in Matthew's Gospel so as to bring to limelight some current works already done on Matt 5:13-16 to avoid replicating what had already been done. The idea of this chapter is to establish the indispensability and originality of this book. The author limits himself as much as possible to the works written in recent years. Here the author notices that whereas there are numerous books- commentaries and expositions already written on Matthew's Gospel as a whole but very limited literature is available on the specific area of this book namely Matt 5:13-16. The author, therefore, divides this chapter into five main sections namely, the central theme of Matthew's Gospel, Matthew's Gospel in recent studies, the Sermon on the Mount in recent studies. The author also undertakes the review of relevant literature written recently by Nigerian scholars as well as literature on the text of the study namely Matt 5:13-16 from the point of view of how scholars have looked at the text as it affects its structure and content in most recent times.

2.1. The Central Themes of the Gospel of Matthew

The issue of the general theme of Matthew has engaged the scholarly landscape of all ages. Whereas some argue that it is the theme of fulfillment; others talk of the theme of discipleship and judgment. But suffice it to say at this point that majority of scholars see the central theme of Matthew's

Gospel to be the "Theme of fulfilment."[50] Among those who see fulfillment as the central theme of Matthew's Gospel is William Barclay who says "It is Matthew's primary and deliberate purpose to show how the OT prophecies received their fulfilment in Jesus; how every detail of Jesus' life was foreshadowed in the prophets; and thus to compel the Jews to admit that Jesus was the Messiah."[51] Matthew's gospel "has one phrase which runs through it like an ever-recurring theme- 'this is to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet! That phrase occurs in the gospel as often as 16 times."[52] The essence is to reassure the Jews of the fulfilment of their Jewish heritage. He emphasizes this when he argues that Matthew presents Jesus as King. From the beginning to the end he writes to portray Jesus' kingship (Messiah). The theme of fulfilment brings to mind the reason behind the genealogy (1:1-17); the usage of the title "Son of David" (15:22; 21:9, 15); wise men looked for and found him as the king of the Jews (2:2); the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is kingly (21:1-11); he answers a king before Pilate (27:11); titled as king (27:37); he came with the actual meaning of the Torah (5:21, 27, 34, 38, 43); and he is the one who has the whole authority in both heaven and earth (28:18).[53]

In the same vein, Donald Senior affirms the theme of fulfilment in Matthew's Gospel thus:

> Following Jesus, Matthew reminds his readers, this is not to abandon or violate their sacred religious heritage, but to experience the

[50]R.T. France, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel of Matthew (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Com. Grand Rapids, 2007) 10.

[51]William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1 Chapt 1-10 (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1997) 6.

[52] Baclay 6.

[53] Baclay 9.

> fulfilment of all it longed for. Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of Abraham (1:1) who had come to liberate Israel and save his people from their sins (1:21). Jesus had not come to destroy the Law and the prophets' but 'to fulfil them (5:17). Thus Jesus' teachings and actions fulfil the scriptures and ushers in the final age of God's salvation.[54]

Following the same line of argument, Warren Carter maintains that the central theme of the Gospel according to Matthew is the theme of fulfilment. For him, that is the reason behind the gospel's genealogy. That means the genealogy was arranged to underscore the above point. It presents Jesus as the long awaited Messiah (1:16) who is the son of David as well as the Son of Abraham (1:1). Chapters 2-3 present other promises of the OT that got its fulfilment with the coming of Jesus the Messiah (2:6, 15b, 18, 23b; 3:3 . . .) as the apogee of God's relationship with his people (1:23 and 28:20b). Matthew presents Jesus in his gospel as one who manifests and fulfils God's saving presence among his people (1:23; 28:20b). Jesus manifests this saving presence of God among his people through at least four different ways, namely, through his actions especially through his various healing exercises, exorcisms as well as eating meals with the marginalized (9:1-7, 10-17; 12:28). Secondly, he does that through his teachings which are clearly seen in the five discourses of the Gospel. Thirdly, he does that through his death and resurrection (20:28); fourthly, through his coming at the end of the age (24:13).[55]

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[54]Donald Senior "Matthew's Gospel as Ethical Guide" The Bible Today Vol. 36, No. 5, Sept/Oct (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998) 275.

[55]Warren Carter, "Learning to Live as Faithful Disciples" in The Bible Today, vol. 36, No. 5 Sept 1998) 288.

W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann also subscribe to the theme of fulfilment as the central theme of Matthew's Gospel. For them, Matthew "consistently stresses the element of 'fulfilment' . . . and all four gospels in varying ways and degrees (followed later by Acts) emphasize the ministry of Jesus as the consummation of the prophecy of the OT. That is to say, the four gospels indissolubly link the OT and the revelation in Jesus."[56] Camillus Umoh is also among scholars who affirm that the theme of fulfilment is the central theme of this gospel. This idea of fulfilment theology is what he pursued in his article where he made us to understand the reason behind the OT prophetic tradition quotation seen in the gospel of Matthew. For him the theme of fulfilment is like a thread that joins the contents of the gospel together. Hence, Matthew's use of OT quotation is to convince one that Jesus was the telos of what the OT had promised;[57] the earlier foreshadows the latter, much in the sense of prophecy and fulfilment. Donald A. Hagner also affirms the above when he says, "This heavy dependence on the OT reflects Matthew's interest in the gospel of the kingdom as the fulfilment of the OT expectation. Of particular interest in this regard are the so-called fulfilment quotations, one of the most distinctive features of Matthew."[58]

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[56] W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann Matthew The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1971) Xxviii.

[57]Camillus Umoh "A Challenge for African Exegetes and Theologians: Matthew's Interpretation of the Prophetic Tradition" Jean-Bosco Mattand Bulembat ed. Prophecy and Prophets in the Bible: Requirements of Prophetism in the Church as Family of God in Africa (Kinshasa 2004: Proceedings of the Eleventh Congress) 169.

[58] Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13 Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub. 1993) Liv.

R.T. France expresses the same idea thus, this "Copious quotation of and allusions to the OT is not of course peculiar to Matthew; it is found throughout the NT, . . . but among the gospels, Matthew stands out for his sustained and creative presentation of this theme of fulfilment in Jesus."[59] Therefore, Matthew sees Jesus as the Jewish Messiah (1:1, 18) and the authoritative teacher in the tradition of Moses (5:1).

Helen Doohan even though she accepts the theme of fulfilment as the central them of the Matthean Gospel, states that the theme of fulfilment is not only seen from the point of view of copious quotation of the OT (1:22-23; 4:14; 8:17; 13:35) as seen in genealogy and other places but also through Jesus' teachings. He taught with authority, for instance, he says: "You have heard . . . but I say to you. . ." (5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).[60] The fact that Jesus teaches with authority also points to the idea of fulfilment as contained in the Gospel. The implication is that others before him were mere messengers and he is the owner of the message.

Albright and Mann are of the view that "Matthew has two principal interests: the fulfilment of God's purposes in and through Jesus, and how this fulfilment will find expression in the community which Jesus founded."[61] Daniel Ulrich emphasizes the theme of fulfilment when he says, "Although Matt 24:14; 26:13; and 28:19-20 are the most explicit indications that the author expected a widespread missional audience; Other evidence point in the same direction . . . the parable (13:1-9, 18-23) and its interpretation show that the word of the kingdom must be scattered widely, since it will

[59] France 11.
[60] Helen Doohan, The Bible Today, Matthew, 270.
[61] Albright and Mann XX.

bear fruit in only some of its hearers."[62] Finally, Harrington is of the view that the Sermon on the Mount presents Jesus as "the authoritative interpreter of the Law of Moses and puts forward as his basic principles "not to abolish but to fulfil" (5:17)."[63]

Contrary to the theme of fulfilment, Babara E. Bowe presents the theme of discipleship and judgment as the central preoccupation of Matthew. He says, "Matthew's Gospel emphasizes this theme of judgment of God in a special way and underscores the way in which it effects a 'separation' between what is judged positively or negatively, good or bad" (3:12).[64] A lot of things in the Gospel of Matthew present the "discipleship" as the central theme of the gospel. The reason may be the fact that one cannot talk of the theme of fulfilment without thinking of the chosen disciples who would transmit the message of fulfilment to their brothers and sisters and even beyond; they are also the signs of judgment as a result of what they are supposed to be in the society. David Sim is among those who accept the theme of discipleship and judgment as the central theme of the Matthean Gospel.[65]

On the same line of argument Hagner says,

> One of the key reasons Jesus hand-picked disciples and taught them was for the very purpose that they might pass on his teaching after he had departed. That they would have

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[62] Daniel Ulrich, "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew" The Catholic Biblical Quarterly The (Vol. 49, No. 2, 1987) 73.

[63] Harrington 284.

[64] Babara E. Bowe, "The Criteria for Judgment in the Gospel of Matthew" The Bible Today, Vol. 36, 296.

[65] David Sim The Gospel and Christian Judaism, The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Scotland: T & T Clerk Ltd, 1998).

> taken this responsibility seriously seems self-evident. In Matthew, Jesus is presented as the 'one teacher' (*kathētēs,* 23:10), and the commission at the end of the Gospel stresses the responsibility of the disciples to hand on Jesus' teachings (28:20).[66]

What we have seen from scholars as regards the central theme of Matthean Gospel is that fulfilment, discipleship and judgment are possible central themes. The most recurrent theme among the three is the theme of fulfilment. Jesus is the expected Messiah and the one who called the disciples so as to impart in them the proper teaching of the Torah. This work, therefore, adopts the theme of fulfilment as the central them of Matthew's Gospel. The line of thought of this Gospel can be summarized as follows: anyone who refuses to accept the proper interpretation of the Gospel from Jesus, the expected Messiah, through the hands of the disciples is liable to judgment.

2.2. The Gospel of Matthew in Recent Research

Studies on the Gospel of Matthew feature significantly in recent research. W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison in their work "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew"[67] take up the issue of method in the study of the Gospel of Matthew. For them the predominant method by many commentators tends to turn the text into "Museum pieces" instead of a study of the actual text. The result is that they have removed interest from the text to issues outside the text like history. Hence what the text of the Gospel

[66]Hagner Xlix.

[67]William D. Davies, and Dale C. Allison, A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988).

meant in the context has virtually replaced what the Gospel means in the present. To correct this situation, they suggest first the discovery of the genre of the text which will then determine the proper method of its study. For them Matthew has various genres ranging from myth to catechism and apologetics. To study such a text no single method should be emphasized.

Hence, they employ a method which they captioned "Principled Eclecticism" which in their view is more traditional historical-critical approach. They prefer this method to any other because the gospel of Matthew has a history. Again this method is adequate because the text of Matthew makes an indisputable assumption that behind it and the community within which and to which its author wrote, stands the life, death, and resurrection of an actual person, Jesus of Nazareth. These no doubt demand historical investigation. The text of Matthew according to them provides no access to Jesus because his words and deeds have been interpreted by the sources incorporated in the gospel and were arranged again for further sets of interpretations. On Matt. 5:13-16 which they title "Summary Statement of the Task of God's People" they use "God's people" instead of the "disciples" which imply that anyone who becomes God's is automatically part of those Jesus addressed.

W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann maintain the traditional historical critical method in studying the Gospel of Matthew in their work, "*Matthew: A New Testament with Introduction and Commentary."*[68] For them, behind the Gospel there is a whole

[68]William F. Albright, and C.S. Mann, Matthew: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (New York: The Anchor Bible Doubleday, 1971).

set of affirmation on cultural, legal, and spiritual traditions which grew around the belief that Israel was the chosen people of God and that the coming of the Messiah was the fulfilment of God's revelation of himself to humanity. This was the conviction of the nascent Christian community with which it met the world of its day, both Jewish and Greek, therefore the issue of Jesus as the promised Messiah has to be taken seriously. On Matt. 5:13-16, which they see as "Marks of the Disciples;" they also consider it under the Great Instruction addressed to the disciples.

Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, in his book *"Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew"*[69] undertakes what he calls a "cordial" reading of the Gospel of Matthew. His interest is not an exegesis that is purely scientific, historicist, and archaeological, but a meditation. Even though he does not denigrate in any way the work of serious exegetes he rather draws attention to proclamation of the kingdom of God as an Evangelized Discourse.

In his analysis of *"Salt of the Earth and Light of the World (5:13-16)"* he identifies Christians as the people who were characterized in the above text as salt and light. On the general note he concluded his analysis of the above text by saying that the disciple himself is responsible if the world around the Christian remains crouching in lethargy, and untransformed.
J.C. Ryle, in his book, *"Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Matthew"*[70] takes the same bent as we have in the work of

[69]Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996).

[70]J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Matthew (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001).

Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. He tells us that his work is not a learned critical commentary. The author looks at the Gospel of Matthew from doctrinal and practical points of view. He followed chapter by chapter approach in his study of Matthew. In Matt. 5 which he captions, "The Character of True Christians, and the Connection Between the Teaching of Christ and the Old Testament (5:13-20)" Ryle lumps together two units namely 5:13-16 and 5:17-20. In his treatment of the first section (Matt 5:13-16) instead of the name "disciples" he uses "Christians" or "true Christians". On Vv 13-16 Ryle concludes that there must be something marked, distinct, and peculiar about the Christian character, if they are true Christians.

Unlike W.F. Albright and C. S. Mann, as well as Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, and J. C. Ryle, R. T. France in his book, *"The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew"*[71] maintains that his commentary is a commentary on Matthew's Gospel and never a commentary on commentaries. He intends this work to be an exegetical commentary which proceeds from the text outward rather than one which seeks confirmation in the text for a separately formulated position. That means France in this commentary allows the text to lead and not the other way round. France focuses on an exegesis of Matthew's present text without emphasis on the prehistory of its materials or details of synoptic comparison. Thus he takes into account the recent rhetorical and sociological inquiries in elucidating the meaning of the text and discovers the Gospel of Matthew as the presentation of the activities of the Messiah.

[71] R. T. France on his book, The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2007).

M. Palachuvattil in his work "*The One Who Does the Will of the Father*"[72] presents the distinguishing character of Disciples according to the Gospel of Matthew. It is an exegetical theological study. This work is a doctoral dissertation. It contends that Matthew employed the word *"thelēma"* at various stages in his narrative as a referral point that unites different dimensions of being a disciple of Jesus. To address the topic he discusses three pericopae in which the theme of those who do the will of the Father is developed namely the call to do the will of the Father (Matt 7:21-23); those who do the will of the Father as the family of Jesus (Matt. 12:46-50); and judgment within the family on doing the will of the Father (Matt 21:28-32). The conclusion he arrived at is that according to Matthew, disciples are those who live in the saving love of the Father and prove to be righteous in loving the others with the Logic of the Father, who confess with their ("thy will be done") and seek with all their heart, soul and mind ("to the will of the father").

Warren Carter's book *"Matthew and the Margins, A Socio-political and Religious Reading*"[73] devotes some pages where he discussed "Salt and Light" (5:13-16). Carter believes that Matthew could be read in various ways. One of which is what he terms the cultural margins. He sees this as a novelty for this has not been prominent among the interpreters of the Gospel. According to this reading, there are several experiences of the cultural margins because of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, political views,

[72] M. Palachuvattil, The One Who Does the Will of the Father, Distinguishing Character of Disciples According to Matthew: An Exegetical Theological Study, Tesi Gregoriana, Serie Theologica 154 (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 2007).

[73] Warren Carter Matthew and the Margins, A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading (India: Theological Publications in India, 2007).

economic realities, age, relational and professional experiences. We can learn from our experiences of exclusion and powerlessness. Carter concludes that this method of reading the gospel from the margins is adequate because the Gospel emanated from a deeply marginalized group, outlawed group whose founder was killed like a common criminal. Hence the reading of the Gospel from the margins is the guiding agenda for him.

Carter did not undertake a source and redaction study of each pericope. Instead he used audience-oriented approach that attends to the interaction of the final text form and socio-historically located audience. In his treatment of 5:13-16, he concludes that salt and light emphasize the missional identity and lifestyle of disciples. This identity and lifestyle challenge the *status quo.* Such, according to him, is a costly demand for a minority and marginal community vulnerable to being overpowered by, or accommodating itself to the dominant culture.

From the foregoing, the various aspects covered by recent studies on Matthew seem to concentrate mostly on issues of methodologies and hermeneutics without special attention to the text in question. Scholars have not really given attention to this text (Matt 5:13-16) instead the attention it has received emanates from theologians who are not biblical scholars. Scholars who made attempt to handle this text at all did that only in passing and never in detail. Even those who handled it in passing did that on the general basis without contextualizing it, that is, even in them all, there is mostly no attempt at a contextual approach which is the preferred method of the present writer. This study therefore sets out to study this all important text of Matthew in detail and in the context of

Christians in Nigeria which no one, to the best of my knowledge, has done.

2.3. The Sermon on the Mount in Recent Research:

Since the heart of this book is located within the Sermon on the Mount (SM), our attention now turns to works done on the Sermon on the Mount in recent Matthean research; even here the available literature is surprisingly limited.

In his work "What Jesus Meant: The Beatitudes and a Meaningful Life"[74] Erik Kolbell describes Jesus as the rabbi showing us the way of the kingdom, and discusses the eight beatitudes in Matt 5:3-12. This hard-hitting volume examines the eight pillars of "a life of faith in a world of doubt." Jesus, the rabbi, shows us that the path of discipleship consists of meekness, empathy, righteousness, peace, persecution, purity, poverty and simplicity. Just take a moment and let those codes of conduct sink into your consciousness. What do all of them have in common? They go against the grain of contemporary culture. Jesus does not take the path of ease and comfort, and neither can those who follow him. The interest of Kolbell is on the study of the eight beatitudes. He did not extend it to the study of Matt 5:13-16.

G. O'Collins in his work, "The Lord's Prayer"[75] reflects phrase-by-phrase and word-by-word on Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer without in any way forgetting the Lukan version. After the introduction, he deals with the prayer under the following headings: Prayer addressing God, the "You" petitions, the "We" petitions and further considerations. His

[74] E. Kolbell What Jesus Meant: The Beatitudes and a Meaningful Life (Louisville- London: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

[75] G. O'Collins The Lord's Prayer (New York-Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2007).

conclusion was that the Lord's Prayer summarizes the message of the kingdom and of the gospel, and so we can do nothing less than treasure it with deep thanks and say it or sing it with quiet devotion. This portrays to us the inclination of O'Collins. He has nothing to do with other parts of the Sermon on the Mount.

In his "Studies in the Sermon on the Mount"[76] Oswald Chambers undertakes a homiletic rather than an exegetical work. He sees Sermon on the Mount principally as a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit abides with us. That means without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to live the life as manifested by the Sermon on the Mount.

Discussing Matt 5:13-16 as "The Divine Disadvantage" he points out that the saint referred to in the Sermon on the Mount cannot hide but must always be in the public glare. The ugly situations in the world provide opportunity for the Christians to pretend as if they are not, lest they jeopardise themselves. Jesus shows that he is against such a hidden and pretentious life by using the most conspicuous things known to men namely salt, light, and a city set on a hill and says, "Be like that in your home, in your business, in your church; be conspicuously a Christian for ridicule or respect according to the mood of the people you are with."[77] He sees being salt as being disadvantaged because, the man who is wrong with God is like an open wound, and when salt gets into it, it causes annoyance and distress and he is spiteful and bitter. This according to him causes irritation which spells persecution for the saint.

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[76] Oswald Chambers Studies in the Sermon on the Mount (London: Oswald Chambers Publications Association and Marshal, Morgan and Scott, 1960).

[77] Oswald Chambers 18.

From verses 14-16 he sees light as something that attracts bats, and night-moths, and points out the way for burglars as well as honest people. The implication of this is that it is a warning that men will certainly defraud us. Also a city is seen as a gathering place for the entire human drift-wood that will not work for its own living, and a Christian will have any number of parasites and ungrateful hangers-on.

One has the impression that Chambers understands the analogy of a "City on a high" wrongly. The text as we have it shows that the phrase refers to the disciples as a community of light, or salt that does not welcome any impurity, or darkness however his analysis on the nature of light to attract both the good and the bad is a novelty. But he neglected another image Jesus uses to illustrate the conspicuous nature of the disciples and that is a "Lamp on a Lampstand."

A new perspective on the Sermon on the Mount is presented by W.D. Davies in his work "The Sermon on the Mount."[78] He studies the Sermon on the Mount under five headings. Firstly, he considers how Matthew the evangelist intended the Sermon on the Mount to be understood; placing it in its setting within the Gospel as a whole and showing that Matthew presented Jesus as a second Moses and Lawgiver. Secondly, he considers it in the setting of Jewish Messianic expectation and thirdly, on the setting of the contemporary Judaism, where he shows that there were certain forces at work which led to the presentation of Jesus in this light. Fourthly, he discusses whether this conception is an innovation or whether forces in the early church prepared the way for this interpretation and finally whether Matthew was departing from the mind of Jesus

[78]W.D. Davies The Sermon on the Mount (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

Himself. Being an examination of the historical setting of the Sermon on the Mount, Davies believes that Source criticism and Form Criticism have complicated attempts to understand Matt 5-7 as a totality by dividing it into small sections, the authenticity of which is very variously estimated. His conclusion is that, Source, Form and Liturgical Criticism make the interpretation of Matt 5-7 as a unity very tortuous. Thus for him Matthew intended 5-7 to be a unit (5:1-2; 7:28-29).

Pinchas Lapide in his book "The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action?"[79] sets out to recover the background of the Sermon on the Mount. Pinchas Lapide did not set out to treat the whole Sermon on the Mount, instead he selected some areas he thinks will help him in investigating the Sermon on the Mount from the stand point of Jesus' Jewish background and fundamentally Hebraic quality of his ethical teachings. He reconstructs the Jewish context in which Jesus of Nazareth lived, and worked and translated the Greek Testament text back into his mother tongue, thereby attempting to recover the perennial dynamism of this Sermon for our time.

He therefore sets the Sermon on the Mount within the context of Rabbinic Judaism, exploring the dynamics of Jesus' teaching that do not represent anti-theses, but a realistic utopia that can be achieved through a timeless imitation of God that transcends one's ethical orientation. Through alerting the reader to translation errors and misunderstandings, he offers an account of Torah exegesis according to Jesus which proceeds from the dual commandment of love. He refers to different Christian commentators and Jewish explanations in order to provide a balanced, readable interpretation of the Sermon on

[79]Pinchas Lapide The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action? (New York: Orbis Books, 1986).

the Mount from a Rabbinic perspective, interlaced with comments from a modern perspective. His interest therefore was not on Matt. 5:13-16 which this book studies.

Harrington sees the Sermon on the Mount as the most popular part of the bible that even the Christians and non-Christians alike quote. For some scholars, Sermon on the Mount is "a summary or compendium of Jesus' most important and distinctive teachings."[80] Therefore, Sermon on the Mount "shapes Christians to discern wisely and to act correctly". Hence he refers to it as "ethical teachings."[81] David Sim refers to it as the "Charter of the Matthean community."[82] That means it is the code of conduct for the members of his community. The materials contained therein serve to determine and sharpen the boundaries between the evangelist's group and those who live outside it. Prominent among these groups are the Gentiles (5:47; 6:7, 32) and Law-free (or Pauline) Christians (5:17-19; 7:13-27). Hence there righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees (5:20) and to avoid their hypocritical public displays of piety (6:1-18).[83] Albright and Mann see it as "The Great instruction."[84] Matera says that the Sermon on the Mount is of immense importance for Jesus ministry, it carries the program announced at the beginning of Jesus' ministry.[85] These views are at the foundation of this thesis. It believes that Matt. 5:13-16 is an essential part of Matthew's Gospel.

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[80] Harrington 282.
[81] Harrington 285.
[82] Sim 227.
[83] Sim 141.
[84] Albright and Mann Xx
[85] F.J. Matera "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel" The Catholic Biblical Quarterly. 49/2 (1987) 238.

Having seen the interest of scholars in recent years as it affects the study of Sermon on the Mount, we discovered that most of the scholars are mostly interested in the whole Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) and rarely on the specific text under study. Hence we feel that we have something new to offer by undertaking the writing of this book.

2.4. Nigerian Scholars on Matthew's Gospel

In a recent article titled "A Challenge for African Exegetes and Theologians: Matthew's Interpretation of the Prophetic Tradition"[86] Camillus Umoh examines Matthew's interpretation of prophetic tradition with particular attention to his use of the Immanuel Prophecies. According to him, Matthew's interpretation of this tradition shapes his theological orientation. He sees Matthew's Gospel as one of the instances where NT Christian communities were faced with challenges of defining and articulating their theological orientations in line with contemporary faith experiences. The Immanuel prophecy (Matt 1:22-23; 4:14-16) was given a fresh interpretation in Matthew in the light of the new faith experience of his community. In the Search for a methodological starting point by African exegetes and theologians, African traditions could also provide such a starting point as the prophetic traditions did for Matthew. Umoh was only interested on Matthew's use of OT prophetic tradition to arrive at the ecclesiology and Christology which Matthew the evangelist presented to his community as the caption of the above article signifies. Other issues on the Gospel of Matthew like the Sermon on the Mount

[86]Camillus Umoh "A Challenge for African Exegetes and Theologians: Matthew's Interpretation of the Prophetic Tradition" Jean-Bosco Mattand Bulembat ed. Prophecy and Prophets in the Bible: Requirements of Prophetism in the Church as Family of God in Africa (Kinshasa 2004: Proceedings of the Eleventh Congress) pp 155-169.

or the characterization of the disciples are outside the scope of his article.

Anthony Ifen Umoren tackles the first of the five discourses of Matthew namely the Sermon on the Mount[87] where he portrays Jesus as one who is greater than a sage. For him Jesus is greater than a sage because while a sage possesses wisdom, Jesus is the wisdom of God. Hence New Testament presents him as proclaiming the good news in sapiential language. Umoren emphasizes that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount offers an example of a sustained address by Jesus to a group of hearers; hence his interest is solely on the presentation of Jesus as one who is greater than mere sage because he is the wisdom of God. This article is one of the most brilliant articles on the Sermon on the Mount we laid our hands on. But then his interest is on the person of Jesus as one greater than the sages and not on the metaphorical characterization of the disciples of Jesus.

J.E. Ukpom "You are the Salt of the Earth . . . You are the Light of the World" (Matt 5:13-16),[88] says from the outset that his is not a theological expose' but that he studies Matt 5:13, 14 in the light of Luke 4:14-22. In his studies he sees Jesus as one who has a purpose which is contained in Luke 4:14-22. Transferring this to the church, Ukpo concludes that the Church is the "Salt of the Earth" and "the Light of the World."

[87]Anthony Ifen Umoren "Jesus Greater than a Sage: Elements of Ancient Rhetoric and Divine Wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7)" Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat (ed): Pan African Association of Catholic Exegetes, Human Wisdom and Divine Wisdom in the Bible (Makuyu-Kenya: Don Bosco Printing Press) 125-139.

[88]J.E. Ukpo. "You are the Salt of the Earth . . . You are the Light of the World" (Matt 5:13-16), Emmnuel Edeh. The Church of Jesus the Saviour in Africa, Vol.One [Lineamenta] (Enugu: Madonna University Press, 2009) pp 1-5.

Salt seasons and light shows the way, for that is exactly what the church in Africa must strive to be, a season of hope for the oppressed, the poor among us. The church must continue to bring to bear on civil society the word of God which is life. Ukpo studies the above text (Matt 5:13, 14) with particular reference to his own denomination. He left out verses 15 and 16 which involve explanation and giving of the responsibility to the disciples.

Martin Egbuogu though a dogmatic theologian, in his book, "Christianity and the De-Sacralization of State Power: An Insight into the Theological Basis of Democracy"[89] devoted some pages for the analysis of Matt 5:13, 14. This he did in Chapter Four with the caption, "The Political Implication of the Characterization of Christians as 'Salt of the earth' and Light of the World.'" Here Egbuogu emphasizes that baptism makes one a follower of Christ. This baptism according to him has a lot of implications. Part of the implication of being baptized is sharing in the very mission of Christ himself which is enlightening the world through the dissemination of the Good News which is proclaimed by word and deed. He concludes by saying that the characterization of Christians as "Light of the World" and "Salt of the Earth" means that they draw from Christ, their Master, and the Original light of the world such power that cannot but influence the human life and that of the society. He limited his analysis on the political arena but our thesis embraces all aspects of human endeavours.

Having seen few works on the Gospel of Matthew by Nigerian scholars and their limitations, we have seen that none of them

[89]Martin Onyemma Eghuogu. Chistianity and the De-Sacralization of State Power: An Insight into the Theological Basis of Democracy (Enugu-Nigeria: Snaap Press, 2006). Pp 340-9.

did an exegetical work solely on the text under study, instead we could only see portions of the text and never the whole text, let us then look at works on Matt 5:13-16 generally.

2.5. The Text of Matt 5:13-16

We shall here occupy ourselves with works written on the above text. There are little or no literature available on the text in question. Professor Finney in his lecture xvi "Christians: The Light of The World."[90] He concentrated only on "Disciples as light" (5:14-16) though in all his treatment of the above theme he never used the word "disciple." He fully assumed without equivocation that Jesus was addressing Christians. The implication is that he takes Christians to be the disciples Jesus addressed. Finney argues that the principal business which Christians have in this world is to enlighten the world. Christ has gone to heaven. He has left Christians as his representatives, to carry out the revelation of God and shine as lights in the world. This author is not interested in 5:13 as his topic depicts.

Roland Deines in his book *"Die Gerechtigkeit der Tora im Reich des Messias. Matt 5:13-20 als Schlὺsseltext der Mattãischen Theologie, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neum Testament 177"*[91] which is a dissertation accepted by the Evangelical theological faculty at the University of Tὺbingen, took Matt 5:13-20 to be the key text of Matthean theology, and argues that with its combination of the themes of

[90]Gospel Truth Ministries www.GospelTruth.net (Copyright (c)1999, 2000.) Retrieved on 6/4/2009.

[91]Roland Deines Die Gerechtigkeit der Tor aim Reich des Messias. Matt 5:13-20 als Schlὺsseltext der Mattãischen Theologie, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neum Testament 177 (Tὺbingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

righteousness, Torah and the Messiah- Son of David the Evangelist establishes the relevance of the Torah transformed in Jesus' commandments for the Christian community. He discusses righteousness and Torah in Matt 5:13-20 under the following headings: the kingdom of heaven as the Matthean context, righteousness as an entrance requirement for the kingdom, the weaving of righteousness statements in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, the commissioning of the disciples (Matt 5:13-16) in the context of the righteousness statement of the Sermon, "fulfilling" as the goal of Jesus coming (5:17), the abiding validity of the Torah fulfilled by Jesus (5:18), the instruction to the teachers (5:19); the righteousness that leads to heaven (5:20) and the disciples' righteousness as God's righteousness (6:1, 33). He concludes that the righteousness of the Torah in the reign of the Messiah is the principal axis of Matthean theology.[92] This is the nearest exegetical work to the text under study. Others more closely to the text are mere meditations, reflections, homilies and never exegetical works.

T.V. Philip in his article "Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16)"[93] like Finney sees the responsibility of Christ's followers as the salt of society, preserving, reconciling, adding taste, giving meaning where there is no meaning, giving hope where there is no hope. The salt character is about the quality of life. Christians upheld the good values in life, they worked for reconciliation and peace, and they prayed for the empire and its well being. In his whole analysis of the above text he never used the word metaphor to identify salt and light. He presumed that.

[92]This is culled from New Testament Absract, 49/3, 2005, pp594-5.

[93] T.V. Philip Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16) htt://www.religion-online.org). Retrieved on 6/4/2009.

According to P. G. Mathew in his article "Salt and Light" (Matt 5:13-16)[94] when Christ says, "You are the salt of the earth," he says that the world is rotten and rotting like rotten meat. That means, the people of this world are wicked, sinful, and against God. By this statement, Christ is telling Christians not to run away from the world and at the same time never to compromise with the world. Matt 5:14, P.G. Matthew says, in the world of deep darkness, God planted his church as light. He has the same inclination in his interpretation with Finney and Philip. Like them he maintains that, just as salt is known for its saltiness, light is known for its shining, and this shining is not optional. Shining is the business of Christians, their business-in the world.

P.G. Matthew sees the disciples of Jesus as the audience of Matt 5:13-16 and by implication he sees them as Christians. P.G. Matthew and other scholars mentioned above are of the opinion that Christians have no other responsibility in the world except to dispel darkness of sin and add flavor to the world to the glory and honour of God.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in his work, "Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the end of the Millenium"[95] which is an interview with Peter Seewald; it is not really a work on the text in question but on the theme of the text in question. The caption of the book looks like a biblical and scholarly work instead it is just a series of interviews of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Peter Seewald on various

[94]P. G. Mathew, M.A., M.Div., Th.M. "Salt and Light" (Matt 5:13-16) (http:/www.gracevalley.org/sermon-times May 4, 1997). Retrieved on 6/4/2009.

[95]Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the end of the Millennium, An Interview with Peter Seewald (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997).

issues as it affects the church. So we have little or nothing to do with this work in this section of the study. The caption of the book makes one to think the book is an exegetical study of Matt 5:13, but it is far from that.

Another work that attracted our attention is the work of St. John Chrysostom, **"**Salt of the Earth and Light of the World."[96] This is an excerpt from his homily on the Gospel of St. Matthew (Hom 15, 6-7: PG 57, 231-232) where he commented on the famous lines in the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus calls his disciples the Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World (Matt. 5: 15-16).[97] This work is merely a reflection and not an exegetical work on the text in question.

The above expositions tell us that there is not yet any serious exegetical work already done on the text of this book (Matt. 5:13-16). This text irrespective of its relevance to the Christianity of Christians has not received the much needed attention from scholars. The attention given to this all important text comes from authors who are not biblical scholars but mainly from Moral, Dogmatic theologians and Homilists. All these point out the indispensability of this book as it studies Matt 5:13-16 in the context of Christians in Nigeria.

[96]John Chrysostom "Salt of the Earth and Light of the World" (http://www.crossroadsinitiativecom) Retrieved on 6/4/2009.

[97]This appears in the Roman Office of Readings on the 20th Sunday in ordinary time with the corresponding biblical reading taken from Isaiah 6: 1-13.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CALL TO BE SALT AND LIGHT IN THE NIGERIA CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

3.1 The Nigerian Christian Context and the Call to be Light and Salt.

Under this section, we undertake a brief history of Christianity in Nigeria. This will answer the following questions: who planted the Christian faith in Nigeria, when, how was it received and how are they living it out among members of the same denomination, members of different denominations as well as the impact Christians in Nigeria have made on the Nigerian Society and nation.

3.2 Brief History of Christianity in Nigeria

Giving a brief history of Christianity in Nigeria makes one reflect once more on the injunction: "Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith" (Heb 13:7). The missionary expedition in Nigeria was characterized by sweat, sufferings, deprivation, and shedding of blood, even death toll. This type of reflection is most appropriate for it helps in understanding how the early missionaries understood, appropriated and transmitted the Sermon on the Mount as a whole and Matt 5:13-16 in particular and evaluation of how it is still today being understood, appropriated and transmitted from generation to generation as constitutive of the beingness of a Christian.

The growth of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) since the end of the Slave Trade has been a very rapid one. It is interesting to know that within two centuries, Christianity and indeed Anglicanism, which started like child's play in Badagry and Abeokuta (1841) has spread like wild fire to all nooks and crannies of Nigeria. However, it was not until 1842 that Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) sowed the seed of Anglicanism properly when he landed in Badagry from Freetown, Sierra Leone.[98]

It took the vibrant effort of the evangelistic spirit of Revd. Henry Townsend and Revd. Samuel Ajai Crowther (a Yoruba ex-slave) for Nigerians to believe in Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of the entire world. In 1846 Revd. Samuel Ajai Crowther, Revd. Henry Townsend, in union with Revd. Colmer and Mr. Phillips worked together to consolidate the CMS Yoruba Mission. After establishing the C.M.S. mission in Yoruba land, Rev Crowther led the C.M.S. team that came down to Onitsha (26th July, 1852)[99]. From Onitsha they evangelized such areas as Obosi, Oko, Nsugbe, and Aboh. He was ably assisted by Rev. John Christopher Taylor (an ex-slave of Igbo parentage) and Simon Jonas. On June 29, 1864, Crowther was elected and consecrated Bishop of the Niger. He spread the Anglican Mission all over the Niger area from Brass to New Calabar and Okirika.[100]

It is on record that the Sermon on the Mount was the first section of the Bible used in the evangelization of the Niger area of Nigeria. That means even if Nigerian Christians are not

[98]http://www.anglican-nig.org. (Retrieved on 15/01/2010).

[99] G.I.C. Eluwa; M.O. Ukagwu; J.U.N. Nwachukwu; A.C.N. Nwaubani, A History of Nigeria For Schools and Colleges (Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick, 2005) 174.

[100] Eluwa; Ukagwu; Nwachukwu; Nwaubani, 175.

aware of any part of the Bible it must never be Sermon on the Mount. The implication is that they are fully aware of this section of the Bible. To substantiate the above idea, Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu, Nwaubani opine,

> At Aboh, Rev. J.F. Schon told the Obi Osai, about the Christian faith. The Obi promised to put an end to human sacrifice in his area. The missionaries also presented the Obi with two Bibles, one in English and the other in Arabic. Osai could neither read nor write, so Simon Jonas (an ex-slave of Igbo parentage) read out the Sermon on the Mount (the Beatitudes, Matt 5), impressed with the reading, the Obi urged Jonas to stay back and teach him and his people the Gospel.[101]

Today, the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion which is episcopally led and synodicaly governed, currently has 165 bishops including 14 archbishops manning 14 ecclesiastical provinces, 161 dioceses on the whole, and a General Synod/Standing Committee that acts for and on behalf of the Church as well as numerous followers of about 18million out of 140 million Nigerians.[102] Considering the sheer vastness of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), it was split into 14 Provinces in 2012 for effective management. Let us mention only the first three provinces for lack of space. Province One, consisting of the Dioceses in the West, is headed by Archbishop Adetiloye; Province Two consisting of the Eastern Dioceses has the Rt. Revd. Ben. Nwankiti of Owerri and after his retirement in 1998 J. A. Onyemelukwe, Bishop of the Niger, became the Archbishop, while Province

[101]Eluwa; Ukagwu; Nwachukwu; Nwaubani, 171.
[102]www.anglican-nig.org Retrieved on 25/02/18.

Three consisting of the Northern Dioceses had the Bishop of Abuja, the Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh, as Archbishop who is the Primate of All Nigeria Anglican Communion. [103] He took over from Rt. Revd. Dr. Peter J. Akinola.

Let us not forget that Christian mission was not confined to the Southern part of the nation but the only thing is that that of the Southern part was more successful than that of the North because of a lot of restrictions coming from the Muslims. In 1857, after dropping Taylor and Jonas at Onitsha, Crowther continued up the Niger towards the North. It was at Gbebe in 1862 that the first baptisms in the North took place. Outside this there were other pockets of attempt from other Christian denominations but all were not all that successful. The only real success story of the missionaries in this area was that of Walter Miller, who was able to establish a C.M.S. Mission at Zaria in 1889.[104] These show that Nigeria is not a novice in the committee of Christian countries.

Another Christian denomination that has made commendable impact in Nigeria is the Catholic Church. The Portuguese priests of the Diocese of Lisbon made the first attempt during the age of exploration to establish the Catholic faith in Nigeria (1515) but were not successful.[105] By every indication, Catholic Church was the first to arrive in Nigeria and that was when the whole church was still one at least in Western Europe. They (Catholic Missionaries) left Nigeria when their mission failed especially when they discovered that Oba of

[103]http://the-church-of-nigeria-anglican-communion. (Retrieved on 26/4/2010).

[104] Eluwa; Ukagwu; Nwachukwu; Nwaubani, 176.

[105] C.A. Imokhai, "The Evolution of the Catholic Church in Nigeria" in The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 1.

Benin was never really interested in the faith. He only wanted their presence for prestige and strategic reasons.[106] The foremost missionaries had the interest of first of all converting the Oba of Benin and through that the entire empire but this move failed because of so many factors. Among the factors included the idea that the Portuguese priests were not solely representing the interest of the Catholic Church but also the interest of the king of Portugal which is the expansion of his trade. There were also cultural and language barriers between them and the natives. They labelled the religion of the natives as completely devilish. The worst of the factors that made them to fail completely was the internal squabble that existed between the early missionaries (i.e. Spanish Capuchin and Portuguese Priests) though from the same faith but from different countries. Imokhai writes,

> The Spanish Capuchin priests were sent by Propaganda to Benin, and they created the Prefecture of Benin thus ceding a part of the Portuguese territory to Spanish control. The Portuguese reacted quickly, and the Prefecture of Benin failed not because the Oba was not favourably disposed, for indeed, he was disposed according to Professor Alan Ryder, but because the Portuguese obstructed the Spanish Capuchin mission for political and commercial reasons which locked Portugal and Spanish in constant and tragic domestic quarrels and rivalries.[107]

Again "the subsequent mission by Propaganda Fidei through the Italian Capuchin priests to Benin was equally foiled by lack

[106] Eluwa; Ukagwu; Nwachukwu; Nwaubani 170.
[107] Imokhai, 2.

of Portuguese cooperation."[108] If these were to be true, one wonders the type of impressions they must have left in the minds of their would be converts. These present the type of situation Paul condemned in Corinth (1 Corinth 3:3). Such motive is against Matt 5:13, 14, and 16.

So when the missions started by Portugal and Spanish failed the challenge was given to Bishop Melchior Marion Bresillac the founder of the Society of the African Missions (SMA). This congregation took up the challenge; they arrived in Lagos Nigeria in 1861 and were later joined by the Holy Ghost Fathers (CSSP), today known as the Spiritans. So "The beginning of what is today known as the Catholic Church in Nigeria was the pioneering work of a Missionary Congregation founded in Lyons, France, on December 8, 1856 by Bishop Melchior de Marion Bresillac."[109] In June 1866 the light of the Catholic Church was firmly lit in the Lagos area of Nigeria through the baptism of thirty-one infants by Fr. Bouche, a singular act that led to the establishment of present day Lagos Ecclesiastical province.[110] The Catholic Church arrived late in this region when compared with the C.M.S.
In Lokoja, Catholics arrived very late, almost eleven years later than Anglicans but they didn't feel it much because of the spirit of oneness between the two Christian denominations. J. J. Onotu captures the scenario thus, "When the Catholic missionaries in the person of Fr. Jules Poirier and his companions arrived eleven years later, one of the first inspired acts of ecumenism was demonstrated by the saintly Bishop Crowther . . . . Bishop Crowther offered the use of his church,

[108] Imokhai, 2.
[109] Imokhai, 8.
[110] M.P. Macloughlin, "Highlights of the History of the Catholic Church in the Lagos Ecclesiastical Province" in The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 16.

so that Catholics and Anglicans shared the same church building for many years."[111] This should be the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of Matt.5:13-16 as well as answer to the prayer of Jesus: "That they may be one" (John 17:21). Why were they worshipping together? They were doing so because Catholics were yet to have a land to erect their own building.

In old Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, Anglicans arrived first on 26th July 1857 and Catholic missionaries arrived on 5th Dec. 1885. On the official level, at the beginning of evangelization in the East, there was a cordial relationship between Catholic Missionaries and Protestant missionaries because of the goodness of one man who proved that he knows what it means to be salt of the earth and light of the world. The person is no other than Bishop Ajai Crowther. When the Catholic missionaries led by Fr. Lutz arrived in Onitsha, they had no place of abode as it happened in Lokoja. "Crowther of the C.M.S. was most helpful and arranged for the Catholic mission to take over a piece of land along the river. The land had been given to the C.M.S. by the Obi."[112] Crowther really knows what it means to be a Christian. The fact that they were aware that Crowther did this type of thing means that he really imparted this spirit to both sides of the missionaries hence fulfilling Matt 5:16.

So, it was through the pioneering work of Fr. Joseph Lutz that Catholic Faith reached Onitsha. "For four years the Holy Ghost Mission spread like wild fire in Eastern Nigeria, and in

[111] J.J. Onotu "Milestones in the Growth of the Catholic Church in Northern Nigeria" History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 57.

[112] Eluwa; Ukagwu; Nwachukwu; Nwaubani 175.

July 1889 the Prefecture of the Lower Niger was founded."[113] The Catholic faith provided alternative to the Easterners who by nature love competition. This spirit of competition no doubt must have contributed to the fast growth of the Catholic faith despite its late arrival in Eastern Nigeria.[114] This type of unimaginable progress must have been the source of conflict, jealousy, rivalry and unhealthy competition that later emerged between the Catholics and Anglicans which are completely against the spirit of Matt 5:13-16.

In the words of Fr. Vincent Nwosu, "The presence of these missionaries, Protestant missionary and Catholic missionary, was an 'intrusion', one with 'pernicious' influence." [115] That means by and large there was a sort of cold war between these missionaries from different Christian denominations. Love of neighbour as oneself is valid provided the so called neighbour is from one's own denomination. To show the level of rivalry that existed at the inception of evangelization in old Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, Nwosu says, "Ogoni was a case in point. Although the area came under the influence of Christianity as early as 1914 it was not until after 1930 that the Catholic Church took root. Before then there were many churches and this situation caused disunity."[116] This rivalry is from the point of view of evangelization- who evangelizes who?

The above fact is viewed differently by different historians. On the assessment of the relationship that existed between the

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[113] Imokhai, 11.

[114] V.A. Nwosu "The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province" History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 40.

[115] Nwosu, 39.

[116] Nwosu, 50.

Royal Niger Company (RNC), C.M.S and the Holy Ghost Missionaries, that made the Catholic mission more popular than C.M.S., Celestine A. Obi opines that RNC was generally disliked by several communities in Igbo land because of their high handedness and victimization of the people. While the C.M.S. supported them or at least they were neutral on the RNC's campaign against the people whereas Holy Ghost missionaries were not only very empathetic but also sympathetic with the people. This no doubt endeared the Holy Ghost missionaries to the natives but at the same time incurred the wrath of both C.M.S. and R.N.C. The company sees it as an act of sabotage.[117] The big question would be, do the present day Catholics still stand on the side of the populace against dubious government policies as light and salt of the nation? I think as a group, yes! But as individuals, rarely! Field Work will throw a light on the above question.

Almost all the Catholic missionaries who came before Fr. Lutz used the methodology of buying and freeing of slaves. Fr. Lutz also used that same method. But the arrival of Fr. Shanahan later brought a change in the methodology of missionary enterprise. Others used the method of buying, training and freeing of slaves as Catholics, Shanahan adopted the method of building schools for the training of the natives. Missionaries like Fr. Carlo Zappa saw this method adopted by Shanahan as being against the spirit of their missionary enterprise and a source of leading the natives astray.[118] Shanahan's intention was really to break the barrier of communication between them and the people they came to evangelize as well as making them part and parcel of the evangelization. Bishop Shanahan

[117] Celestine A. Obi "The Royal Niger Company and the Holy Ghost Mission at Onitsha 1885-1900" The Catholic Church in Onitsha, People, Places and Events (1885-1985) 1.

[118] Imokhai, 11.

believed that if one is educated and he convincingly understands the details of Christianity that person can go about converting others. The intention of Shanahan in using this method seems to be the exact intention of the method the Matthean Jesus used in the formation of his followers hence the Sermon on the Mount. Shanahan must have studied those slaves that were re-bought and given freedom and must have discovered that majority of them reverted to paganism immediately they left the so-called Christian village. The view of this book is that Shanahan used a method that one can regard as second to none. It is the best. What is very clear from the above is that every missionary team used a particular method to achieve a particular goal but one wonders today what the present day missionaries are actually trying to achieve.

Through the tireless missionary effort of Bishop Shanahan and companions in Nigeria especially in the eastern part, the light they ignited in those days has made it possible that almost all towns and villages in this area have at least a central Catholic Church building and one or two secondary schools, not to talk of primary schools. One wonders the spirit with which these schools and churches were welcomed in the Eastern region of Nigeria and indeed all parts of Nigeria. The establishment of schools brought about unhealthy competition, rivalry, quarrels, and selfishness among towns and villages and no doubt they carried this spirit into the church. This spirit of rivalry has bedevilled Nigerian church even till today. One of the things that is destroying the spirit of Christianity in Nigeria today is the quarrel over the location of certain parishes, schools/institutions, who heads what institution and from where must he/she originates, irrespective of his or her qualifications, as well as who becomes what and from where. A case in question now is the vehement rejection of Bishop

Peter Ebele Okpalaeke of the Catholic diocese of Awka in Anambra state by his fellow Catholics (laity and clergy) of Catholic diocese of Aharia, Mbaise in Imo state. His offence is that he is not from Ahiara and not from Imo state and not that he was not qualified.[119] The saga lasted for almost six years. It came to an end because Most Rev. Dr. Peter Ebele Okpalaeke selflessly resigned and Pope gladly accepted his resignation and appointed Most Rev. Dr. Lucius Ugorji, the Bishop of Umuahia as the Apostolic Administrator of Ahiara Diocese.[120] It was very scandalous and shameful. Whatever that was said then by the dissident priests, religious, and laity was against the spirit of Matt. 5:13-16. This is a quality even those who brought the Good News first suffered among themselves, it was somehow inherited or it has been there in the blood of the natives and they carried it into their newly found faith. Macloughlin puts it thus: "One of the major difficulties which the early Fathers had to meet was a type of local petty disunity and jealousy which tended to dissipate the efforts of the missionaries. For instance, each little village and town wanted to have its own church, school, catechist, teacher and so on. Efforts were made to unite the villages wherever they were close together."[121]

The above situation is why we have Queen of Peace Catholic Church and St Charles Catholic Church all in Isulo, a small town in the Catholic Diocese of Awka, Orumba South L.G.A

[119] Abuchi Onwumelu, "Bishop Okpalaeke Resigns as Ahiara Bishop . . . As Pope Appoints Bishop Ugorji of Umuahia Diocese, Apostolic Administrator" in FIDES NEWS PAPER (Feb. 25 – March 3, 2018 Edition, VOL. 26, No. 9), pp 1, 3.

[120] Sam Eyoboka & Chidi Nkwopara, Vanguard News Paper, (www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/ahiara-crisis-bishop-okpalaeke-resigns-pope-appoints-administrator

[121] Macloughlin 24.

of Anambra State. Yes, a small town like Isulo is having two parishes today and their Church buildings are very close to one another. Again the struggle of who owns a particular piece of land where we have today, St Vincent Catholic Church Otikpo led to a serious quarrel between Amesi and Uga towns, all in Aguata L.G. A of Anambra State and all in the Catholic Diocese of Awka. This quarrel led to the emergence of two churches standing opposite one another with names, St Vincent Catholic Church Otikpo Uga and St Vincent Catholic Church Otikpo Amesi. The problem is like "Who owns Otikpo?" Yet these are worshippers in the same Christian denomination. One wonders what influence such actions were having on non-Catholics in those two towns. No wonder the saying, "If an institution can be judged by its infrastructures, and superstructures, the Nigerian Catholic church is ready to go off the launching pad into the orbit of the pastoral challenges in Africa today."[122] To support the above view, Bishop, Dr. J.B. Whelan expressing his joy seeing four Igbo bishops at dedication of Maria Assumpta Cathedral Owerri says among other things "That the Whitemen will leave today and the Igbos take over tomorrow without the smallest hitch is a miracle that could have happened nowhere else in the whole missionary world."[123] Well, what is certain is that "Statistics is not one of God's measurements."[124] Despite all odds, whether driven by the spirit of competition or not, all over Nigeria the enthusiasm of building churches, presbyteries, convents, medical centres, halls, pastoral centres, primary schools, secondary schools and even universities as well as vocational institutes for the youths are very high. The question is, is what is physically seen, the

[122] Imokhai, 11.

[123] Nwosu, 48.

[124] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium, An Interview with Peter Seewald (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997) 16.

same spiritually? This book will certainly address the question.

Bishop Shanahan during his tenure started the training and formation of local clergy by opening a seminary namely St Paul's Seminary at Igboarian. This was followed up and intensified by Archbishop Francis Cardinal Arinze. A. O. Makozi believes strongly that the growth and maturity of the Church in Nigeria is evident from the number of diocesan priests, religious (Rev. Brothers and sisters) and number of indigenous Bishops as well as number of dioceses and ecclesiastical provinces.[125] One of the areas in which credit must be given to Archbishop Arinze (now Francis Cardinal Arinze) was in "Making the laity more involved in the apostolate of the church through the establishment of various pastoral councils both at parish and diocesan levels."[126] In the church today we have National Laity Council of Nigeria (NLCN), Pastoral Councils, Laity Councils, Parish Councils, Catholic Women Organization (CWO), Catholic Men Organization (CMO), Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON), and such laity organizations like Legion of Mary, St. Jude Society, St. Anthony, and associations like Knights of ST. John and Mulumba. The essence of all these is to let all feel that they are part and parcel of evangelization and that the metaphorical description of Matt 5:13-16 is not meant for the ministers alone but for all baptized Christians. These were inaugurated in the light of Lumen Gentium 31 which states,

> The Laity live in the world, that is, in all and in each of the secular professions and occupation. They live in the ordinary conditions of life in

[125]A.O. Makozi "Contemporary Trends in the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria" History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 88-89.

[126] Nwosu, 46.

> the family and in society, from which the web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper role and being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of heaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity.

To authenticate the above submissions of Lumen Gentium, the late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II (now St. Pope John II) in his address to the Laity in Ghana on May 8 1980 says, "As responsible citizens you permeate with the leaven of the Gospel the society in which you live, in its economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual dimensions. When you faithfully carry out these . . . as citizens of both the earthly city and the heavenly kingdom, then are the words of Christ fulfilled: "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world."[127]

Through the works of these missionaries, Nigeria has many Catholic Dioceses, Catholics, Deacons, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals. As at 24th August, 2018, the Catholic Church in Nigeria has 9 ecclesiastical provinces, 45 suffragan dioceses and one apostolic vicariate, one Eparchy. Simply put, there are fifty-six (56) catholic dioceses in Nigeria.[128] Nigeria has seventy-four (74) bishops (including serving and emeriti ones) including 15 Archbishops and three

[127] G.A. Ojo "Emergence of Laity Organizations in Nigeria" History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982)85.

[128] David M. Cheney, Current Dioceses in Nigeria (Catholic-Hierarchy) www.catholic-hierarchy.org. (Retrieved on 24/08/18).

cardinals as well as two other prelates[129]. According to 2010 estimate, Nigeria has 22.6 million baptized Catholics. This population is concentrated in the Eastern part of the country. 2018 estimate no doubt will be up to 26 million baptized Catholics since it was 19 million in 2005.[130] It is not really hyperbolic if one says that there are innumerable number of Catholic priests who have served and are still serving this country today as Catholic ministers. The fact is that there are so many. We have also the highest concentration of Catholic priests in the Eastern part of the country.

Putting the above facts together, that is, the emergence of Anglican Communion and Catholic Church in Nigeria and various structures on ground, we can say without equivocation that the pioneer missionaries did not leave us a Christianity meant for the third world. They did not preach adulterated Gospel or fake Christianity to Nigerians. Nigerian Catholicism is equally Catholic, Apostolic, Holy and One as Roman Catholicism.[131] Today, as corruption has entered into all sectors of the nation, religion has been turned into a money making venture instead of being a way of establishing good relationship with God or a way of knowing, loving and serving God here on earth. Hence, because of this negative ambition, every nook and cranny of Nigeria is filled with churches of all sizes. Thus Fidelis Obiora in 1998 wrote, "By thorough research, by means and process of mathematical calculations and approximation, there are about two thousand five hundred (2500) petty independent denominations of Christians in Nigeria. For example, Abak, a town in Akwa-Ibom state has

[129] Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria (www.cbcn-ng.org. Retrieved on 24/08/18)

[130] Catholic Church in Nigeria. en.m.wikipedia.org. (Retrieved on 24/08/18)

[131] Luke Mbefo "In Defence of the Missionaries in Eastern Nigeria" The Nigerian Journal of Theology, June 1999, Vol. 13, p 58.

about four hundred (400) independent churches. This makes some to cynically remark that churches are great industries in Akwa-Ibom State."[132] This roll call of churches was conducted in 1998, only God knows what we may have today. The cause of all these is the problem of "get-rich quick" syndrome that is bedevilling the nation.

[132] Fidelis Obiora The Divine Deceit: Business in Religion (Enugu: Optimal Publishers, 1998) 16.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 5:13-16

This chapter is the exegetical and theological exposition of Matt 5:13-16 which is the scientific interpretation of the text in its context. Since the method used in this work has already been explained in chapter one above, we shall therefore not give further details on methodology here but rather proceed with the prevalent interpretation of the text starting with the background information of the Gospel. This procedure is consistent with the method we are using - Historical Critical Method.

4.1. Background of Matthew's Gospel

Since many trace the origin of the Matthean community to Antioch, we shall examine the probability of the emergence and existence of the Gospel in that region. The evidence of the existence of a Christian community in Antioch could be traced from the Lucan account in Acts thus,

> Those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch . . . Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul

> . . . he brought him to Antioch. . . (Acts 11:19-26).

From every indication the church of Antioch started as a result of the persecution that emanated from the preaching of Stephen, his eventual death and the scattering of the believers outside Jerusalem with the exception of the apostles (Acts 8:1). Those who left Jerusalem as a result of the persecution were Jewish Christian converts as well as the Hellenist Christians. This group distinguished themselves by the way they lived and followed Christ despite all other demands on them as a result of their root in Judaism. This distinction merited them the name: "Christians" (Acts 11:26). The Antiochene Church therefore has its origin in the circle of the Hellenists who were among the first converts to the Christian movement in Jerusalem (Acts 11:19-29).

An important characteristic of this group of Christians is that they adopted a different version of the Christian message by combining faith in Jesus as the Messiah with a critical attitude towards the Law and the Temple. They soon found themselves opposed by the Jews and eventually were persecuted by other Law-observant Jews in Jerusalem. Some of them, no doubt, would have fled from Jerusalem and some of them would have settled in Antioch. Antioch provided them with the conducive environment that enabled them to take their law-critical attitude to its logical conclusion.[133]

Consequently, R.T. France locates the gospel within this period of uncomfortable tension, arising from the apparently

[133] David Sim The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, The Historical and Social Setting of the Matthean Community (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 106.

incompatible elements within the gospel which is deeply rooted in Jewish establishment and a conviction that the future of the kingdom of heaven lies not in the institutions of Judaism but in a newly constituted people of God focused not on national origin but on allegiance to Jesus the Messiah. This tension is seen mainly in the elements of continuity and discontinuity within the gospel.[134]

It is therefore likely that the early history of the Matthean community was therefore a turbulent one because it seems that "the church in Antioch found itself at the centre of a continuing power struggle between the Hellenists and Paul on the one hand, and James and the Jerusalem church on the other. James eventually won the day, and the Antiochene church was transformed from a law-free community to a law-observant community modelled on the traditions and practice of the Jews in Jerusalem."[135]

In the face of all these struggles within the community, Christianity was no longer regarded as a sect within Judaism but as a community that was above Judaism since it had already accepted Jesus as the fulfilment of OT prophecies. Donald Hagner observes thus:

> Matthean Community thus shared in two worlds, the Jewish and the Christian. Although the members of this community saw their Christianity as the true fulfilment of Judaism, they were also very conscious that they had broken with their unbelieving brothers and sisters. They were struggling to define and

[134] R.T. France, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel of Matthew (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Com. Grand Rapids, 2007) 17.

[135] Sim 106-7.

> defend a Jewish Christianity to the Jews, on the one hand and to realize their identity with Gentile Christians, on the other. This twofold challenge explains the basic tensions encountered in the Gospel.[136]

Apart from the tension that resulted from the Gentile-Jewish Christian relationship, there was also competition and tension which existed between the formative Judaism and Christian Judaism, each claiming to be the fulfilment of prophetic promises. This confusion no doubt was made open by the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple hence, "With the Roman capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of its Temple in A.D. 70, the question facing all Jews was: How can the best in the Jewish heritage be preserved, handed on, and kept alive?"[137] This situation opened a new road map in Judaism. With the exit of the Temple, the Chief Priests and the Levites are out of the question. But since the Torah persists the Pharisees and Scribes as well as other sects claim to be the authentic interpreters of the Torah. In the midst of the claims and counter claims, Matthean community claims that what the entire Jews have waited for several years are now fulfilled in Christ the Messiah, in fact, in their Christ is the fulfilment and personification of the Torah.[138] This may give us a clue why Matthean Jesus has to declare his stand on the Torah (Matt 5:17-20). With claims and counter claims the struggle seems to be staged between Matthean Christian Jews and formative

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[136] Donald A. Hagner Matthew 1-13 Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 33A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993) LXXI.

[137] Daniel Harrington "Matthew" The Bible Today 36/5, Sept/Oct (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998) 278.

[138] Luke Timothy Johnson The Writings of the New Testament, An Introduction (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 202.

Judaism. "The evidence for competition between Matthean Jewish Christians and formative Judaism includes the Gospel's polemical characterizations of Israel's leaders and its pointed contrasts between 'their synagogues' and 'my assembly' (Matt 4:23; 6:2, 5; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13: 54; 16:18; 23:6, 15, 34)."[139] The Matthean community prides itself as the one following closely on the footsteps of Jesus and therefore the authentic interpreter of the Torah.

The Gospel of Matthew has a lot to address. This is because the members of the Matthean community apart from the persecutions they faced from their fellow Jews who saw them as lapsed members; they also faced persecution from their Gentile neighbours. The members of the community seem to be confused whether to fall back to Judaism or to remain as Christians as a result of numerous persecutions they faced coupled with the fewness of their number. Yet despite this fewness in number, Matthean Jesus challenged his disciples that they are the "Salt of the Earth" and "Light of the World" (Matt 5:13, 14).

The situation under which Matthew wrote called for new decisions based on faith in Jesus, and his distinctions enabled his church to see the obvious path they needed to follow.[140] Put in another way, the question for believers in Jesus in Matthew's time was whether to go back to the religious traditions they knew as Jews or to embrace a new vision of life, based on a reinterpretation of the teaching of their faith in the light of Jesus' message simply known as new righteousness. As the gospel writer identifies this dilemma facing his

[139]Daniel Ulrich, "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew" The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 49/ 2 (1987) 76.

[140] Helen Doohan "Matthew" The Bible Today, 36/5, Sept/Oct (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998) 270.

community, he brings his immersion in Judaism and its teaching to bear current needs.[141] Matthew wrote to convince his community that they are on the right path. This must have been the reason why the Matthean Jesus started the Sermon on the Mount (which is the first of the five discourses) with the beatitudes (5:3-12).

Who then were the recipients of this gospel? Craig Keener in his explanation of the function of the Gospel, points out the recipient of the Gospel, "The Gospel was to function as a discipline manual relevant to a Jewish Christian community engaged in the Gentile mission and dead locked in scriptural polemics with their local synagogue communities."[142] For Donald Senior, "Matthew wrote his gospel for a community in the midst of a profound transition point in the early church, a wrenching transition from the familiar cultural and religious context provided by Judaism to one being increasingly informed by a Gentile context, a future that for many of Matthew's Jewish Christians may have seemed uncertain and perhaps threatening."[143]

The primal audience of the gospel were the Law-observant Christians or the Christian Jews. It later went into the hands of the Law-free Christians and from them to the whole

[141]Camillus Umoh. "A Challenge for African Exegetes and Theologians: Matthew's Interpretation of the Prophetic Tradition" Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat (ed.) Prophecy and Prophets in the Bible: Requirments of Prophetism in the Church as Family of God in Africa (Kinshasa 2004) 156-169.

[142]Craig S. Keener "A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew" Biblica (Vol. 82. JASC 1, Reviewed by Samuel Byrskog, 2001) 113.

[143] Senior, 274.

Christendom hence "Matthew is the Gospel of the church"[144]. Hagner says,

> The data of the Gospel of Matthew are again and again explained most satisfactorily on the hypothesis that the first readers were Jewish Christians. Among various key items to be mentioned here are: the stress throughout the Gospel on fulfilment of the OT and especially the distinctive formula quotations that point to Jesus as the Messiah and his ministry as the dawning of the Messianic age; Matthew's omission of Mark's explanation of Jewish customs . . . and his formulation of several discussions in typical rabbinic patterns (19:3-9). Also worth noting are the apologetic motifs of the infancy narrative (especially against the Jewish claim that the body was stolen (28:12-15).[145]

The audience of the Gospel fluctuates from the disciples, the crowds, to the missional audience (Matt 10:6-7; 24:14; 26:13; 28:18-20). This implies that different discusses or narratives have different audiences but we can say fundamentally that the audience of the Gospel of Matthew is the entire Jewish world while other audiences are on the minority.

> From the gospels themselves, we know that Jesus taught whole crowds on occasion. But to assume that all the teaching recorded in the gospels was so widely disseminated would mean that the same crowds had followed Jesus

[144] Johnson, 187.

[145] Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13 Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub. 1993) LXIV.

> on his journeying . . . It is very unlikely that such a large entourage could constantly accompany Jesus. And there is the additional factor that the gospels clearly distinguish between teaching given to a wide circle of hearers and that given to the restricted circle of the disciples.[146]

This fact is carefully established by Anthony Umoren thus, "Matthew, as a rule, is careful to distinguish between when Jesus addresses the crowds (a mixed company) or does mighty works for their sake (8:18, 33; 11:7-30; 13:1-9) and when he addresses the disciples (a closed, selected company, 10:1-4) and explains his words and works to them in private for their own understanding (8:23-27; 9:37; 10:1-11; 13:10-23; 13:36-52)."[147]

Sermon on the Mount is a constituent part of the Gospel of Matthew which constitutes the first of the five discourses of the Gospel. It does not have different recipients and audiences as such but a closer look at it throws more light on the audience of the Gospel. But suffice to mention here that the following warnings and encouraging sayings of Jesus in Matt 5:11-12; 7:15-23; 10:18 are part of a larger rhetorical strategy for including the Gospel's audience among the people being taught by Jesus.[148]

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[146] Albright and Mann Matthew, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible (N.Y. :Doubleday, 1971) LXXV.

[147] Anthony Ifen Umoren "Jesus Greater than a Sage: Elements of Ancient Rhetoric and Divine Wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7)" Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat (ed): Pan African Association of Catholic Exegetes, Human Wisdom and Divine Wisdom in the Bible (Makuyu-Kenya: Don Bosco Printing Press) 125-139.

[148] Ulrich 68; Partly confirming this, Daniel Harrington says, "Reference to the crowds at the beginning (5:1) and end (7:28-29) of the

The content of the Sermon reveals that his audience were Israelites especially 5:17-19. Law and Prophets are very important in the lives of Israelites. Again, Matthew in the Sermon made a lot of references to the Pharisees whom he accuses of externalism and Scribes whom he accuses of multiplying the Law and making it a burden to people. So by the fact that Matthew mentions the Law, Prophets, Pharisees, Scribes or doctors of the Law and chief priests we can affirm without equivocation that the audience of the Gospel were mainly Israelites. Hence, in the following passages: Matt 5:17-21a, 27a, 31, 33a, 38, 43, 47, Jesus used the lives and teachings of the Jewish leaders to teach his followers about the good news he came with or the ideals of the Law and Prophets. Putting the above ideas together, one can say with some level of certainty that Jews were the audience of the Sermon principally represented by the disciples (Matt 4:25-5:2; 10:1; 11:1; 20:17; 26:20).

As regards the audience of the Sermon, based on Matt 4:23-5:1 and 7:28-29, we submit that though the crowd gathered, the message was not really directed to them but at the same time they were not excluded from the message of the universal brotherhood and sisterhood. This idea makes true the Igbo adage which says, *"Ebe ana adu onye nna ya no odu ka onye nna ya anoro na egedo nti"* (where a father gives instruction to

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Sermon provides a framework for Jesus' teaching of Israel. The mention of the disciples in 5:1 needs not exclude the crowds" His emphasis is that the audience of the Sermon includes not only Jesus' small circle of disciples but also the crowds that gathered from all the surrounding regions including the Gentiles (4: 24-5:2; 7: 28-29) Page 78. Also, Clarence Jordan in his book "Sermon on the Mount" (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1980)1, takes the audience of the Sermon to be the disciples and precisely the twelve. She repeatedly makes references to the 12 as she refers to the hearers of the Sermon.

his son is where one whose father has died listens for his own instruction.) So the Sermon is fundamentally addressed to the Israelites but there is no denying the fact that there are none Israelites who are in the crowds and who are at the same time being also addressed.

The next question that concerns us at this point is the relationship between the evangelist and the recipients of the Gospel. One major probability as regards the relationship between the author and recipients is that "both the original readers and the final redactor . . . were Hellenistic Jews and Jews of the Diaspora rather than Palestinian Jews. This follows not only from the fact that the Gospel was written in Greek but from the apparent proximity of the readers to a Gentile Christianity."[149] This means that the author and the recipients are from the same stock. They know each other very well and as a result know the problem of each other especially ones arising from their background.

4.1.1 Authorship of Matthew's Gospel

Irenaeus who wrote around A.D. 180 is of the opinion that the apostle Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew which appeared in a story recounted by Eusebius, Historia Ecclesia (H.E.5.10.3). It states that Pantaenus, the teacher of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) while in India, met people who were acquainted already with the gospel according to Matthew; "For Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them and left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, and this writing was preserved until the time mentioned."[150]

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[149] Hargner LXV

[150] W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark Ltd, 1988) 8.

Davies and Allison, putting the above idea together, are of the view that the external evidence of the Gospel points to a Palestinian or Hellenistic-Jewish author who wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic, whereas the internal evidence points to someone who wrote in Greek and used Greek sources.[151] This idea is not convincing enough; because nothing shows convincingly that this gospel was once written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Albright and Mann are of the view that "Traditionally, this gospel was written by Matthew, the tax collector described in Matt 9:9 and 10:3, and further identified with the Levi of Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27."[152] Though the title *kata Maththaion* "according to Matthew" could have been affixed to the Gospel sometime in the 2nd century, from early 2nd century, the unanimous tradition of the church has always supported Matthew as the author.[153] This argues against those who assume that the gospels circulated for a generation or more without attribution and that the names of proposed authors were rather arbitrarily attached to them some time in the second century without them being the real authors. The implication is that these renowned authors were attached to the Gospels to show that they had apostolic origin. France also affirms, "Attribution of this gospel to Matthew the apostle goes back to our earliest surviving patristic testimonies, and there is no evidence that any other author was ever proposed. As far back as we can trace it, and from the earliest manuscript attributions that have survived, it is always the Gospel *kata Maththaion".*[154]

The gospel of Matthew has the following characteristics that affirm that it must have been written by a Levite namely,

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[151] Allison and Davies, 9.

[152] W.F. Albright, and C.S. Mann Matthew, The Anchor Bible CLXXVII, See also Daniel J. Harrington, The Bible Today, 280.

[153] Hargner, LXXVI.

[154] France, 15.

conservatism, its interest in the traditional oral law, in Lawyers and Pharisees, as well as traditional eschatology.[155] Matthew the Levite stands a foot higher in the chances of being the author of this Gospel with Jewish orientation. Albright and Mann point out that Matthew a Levite and a tax collector was the probable author of this gospel.[156]

Levi as related to Matthew is nothing but an adjective that serves as the tribal designation of the man who was called by Jesus from his tax collecting office and that man according to tradition is Matthew. In union with Davies and Dale C. Allison, Albright and Mann say,

> Eusebius (ca. A.D. 270-340) quotes Papias [157] (ca. A.D. 130) as saying that Matthew compiled *(sunetaxe)* the oracles (or 'sayings' – *ta logia*) in the Hebrew language *(Hebraidi dialektō*), but everyone interpreted them (or 'translated them' – hermēneusen da'auta) as he was able. . . Similarly, Irenaeus is quoted by Eusebius as follows: 'Matthew published a gospel in writing

[155] Albright and Mann, CLXXVIII.

[156] Albright and Mann CLXXVIII: A Levite of the time of Jesus would normally have been a Pharisee, educated, and from an orthodox (i.e. not sectarian) background. With lower status than the Jerusalem-centered priesthood, more numerous than the temple cult could readily absorb, most Levites would be compelled to seek a livelihood apart from the worship of the temple. If Matthew the Levite found a living as a tax collector for the political authorities - and his education would certainly fit him for such responsibility- then his rejection by his fellow Pharisees would follow inevitably. So too would inevitably follow carefully collected reminiscences of Jesus' attitude to the law and to those who made their living by oral interpretation of that law.

[157] Papias was the bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor and the author of a five-volume commentary entitled Exegesis of the Oracles of the Lord.

> also, among the Hebrews in their own language (*en tois Hebraiois tō idia autōn dialektō)* while Peter and Paul in Rome were preaching the Gospel and founding the church.[158]

The implication of this is that Matthew originally wrote the *"ta logia"* in Hebrew which all other evangelists read and interpreted in their own way to suit their communities.

There are efforts by scholars to point out the real author of the Gospel of Matthew. It must be said at once with the majority of the scholars that there is no single feature to which we can point and say without equivocation that Matthew the former tax collector and a Levite is the author of the gospel according to Matthew, all we can say is by inference. Hence, there is no firm conclusion to be drawn as to the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew as we have it today. The only thing we can do and do well is to speculate. What baffles many today is the fact that Jesus lived in a society whose common daily language was probably Aramaic, while our knowledge of his teachings come from documents written in Greek. Though there is no denying the fact that Galileans may have known Greek language but nothing proves that Jesus taught in that language. The implication is that the gospels are at best translations of the words of Jesus from Aramaic into Greek but nothing really

[158] Albright and Mann CLXXIX; this same view is upheld by Raymond E. Brown An Introduction to the NT (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2000) 109; also firmly upheld by Hagner when he says, Eusebius quoted Papias as saying concerning Matthew: 'Matthew for his part compiled the oracles (logia) in the Hebrew (Aramaic dialect and every person translated them as he was able'. The understanding of the above led to a great controversy and even confusion. For instance, 'the early church soon took logia to refer to the Gospel of Matt itself and hence also to establish the priority of Matt over the other Gospels. Those who interpreted became on this view, the authors of Mark, and Luke for example, who made use of Matt as their main source. See page XLIV.

proves this fact.[159] The author can best be described as an anonymous Jewish Christian.

4.1.2 Date and Place of Composition

Date and place of composition for the Gospel is another source of controversy as regards the Gospel of Matthew. There is also no consensus opinion among scholars on this issue. Scholars in their propositions for the date of the composition of this Gospel vary from 40 AD to 100 AD.[160] Some scholars argue that the Gospel was written either prior to the destruction of the second Jerusalem Temple or after the destruction of the Temple.

There are some arguments that support pre-70 AD date as the most probable period for the composition of the Gospel. Foremost among them is the idea that if the gospel was not written before the destruction of the temple, there would not have been reference to: Offering and leaving one's gift at the altar if one discovers that one is not in good communion with one's neighbour or in fact the temple cult in general since there is only one temple which is the temple of Jerusalem (5:23-24; 9:13; 12:5-7). The passage on the rightness of paying of the temple tax (17:24-27), and the reference to swearing by the sanctuary (23:16-22); the idea of praying that one's flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath (24:20); the mentioning of the Sadducees as those who still have some powers (3:7; 16:1, 6, 11-12; 22:23, 34) also go to show that the Temple would have been standing by the time of the gospel composition. This is because all these make little or no sense if the destruction of Jerusalem temple had already taken place before the writing of

[159] John Drane, Introducing the New Testament (Spain: A Lion Book, 1999) 219

[160] Davies and Allison 127-128.

the gospel.[161] Unless these things took place in an improvised place after the destruction of the temple then it is possible that the Gospel was written after the destruction of the main Temple or it was written before the destruction of the Temple. These ideas portray the picture that the temple worship was still fully operational and the Sadducees were still a potent politico-religious force to reckon with.[162] But just accepting the above stand without critiquing it will amount to assuming that the Gospel writer was Jesus himself and no longer a reporter who reported what happened during the period of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The only plausible argument one could advance is that, the writer would have through his editorial comment expressed the idea of the destruction of the Temple, if the Temple was no longer standing during the time of the compilation of the Gospel. This is because, it is a fact that the Gospel of Matthew is about the teachings of Jesus Christ who lived and worked in time and not about the teachings of the author who happen to be a mere reporter.

However, Sim[163] and R. T France argue vehemently against pre-70 dating to Matthew's gospel. For R.T. France, it is "possible that Matthew has preserved such sayings even after they had ceased to be applicable."[164] One wonders the possibility of this Gospel being written before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple because with the Jerusalem temple standing, no one would have found it easy to lead a Jew to a life outside the temple. For the presence of the temple in their midst is like the presence of God in their midst. Hence Jesus is greater than the temple (12:6); greater than Jonah who

[161]Hagner, LXXIV.
[162] Sim, 36.
[163] Ibid.
[164] France, 19

preached and people of Nineveh repented (12:41) and even greater than Solomon who built the temple (12:42).
The Gospel of Matthew was argued by the majority of scholars to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem temple which took place in 70 AD.[165] The present writer agrees with Donald Hagner, who after considering the arguments of those scholars who claimed that the Gospel of Matthew was written before 70 A.D. and of those who argue that it was after 70 A.D. says,

> There is no thus good reason to take seriously the possibility of an early (i.e. pre-70) dating of the Gospel. . . The inclination towards an early date taken here, however, is just that and no more. It needs to be re-emphasized that the dogmatism of critical orthodoxy concerning a post-70 date is unwarranted. But this is no reason to give rein to a similar dogmatism concerning a pre-70 date. We need to remind ourselves how very difficult the dating of the Gospels is and how necessarily speculative our conclusions are.[166]

So as regards the dating of Matthean Gospel we accept post-70 dating, this enables us to understand the line of thought with which the evangelist interpreted the Christ event. There is no longer any need of the temple rather believers have to worship God in Christ (who is the way, the truth and life) in truth and Spirit (John 4:24; 14:6). This may also throw light on the

[165] Such scholars include David Sim; R.T. France; W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison as well as Donald Hagner; Donald Senior and numerous others. For Davies and Allison Matthew was almost certainly written between A.D. 70 and A.D. 100, but in all probability between A.D. 80 and 95.

[166] Hagner, LXXV.

reason why the Matthean Jesus addressed his disciples thus, "You are the light of the world. . . You are the salt of the Earth. . . A city built on a hill top cannot be hidden" (Matt 5:13-16).
As regards the provenance of this Gospel, majority of scholars are more inclined to accept Antioch because it is the only church where Peter was known to have been a leader after James took over from him in the Jerusalem church. The following towns among others are regarded by some scholars as where the gospel originated. They include Caesarea Maritima, Phoenicia, East of the Transjordan, Syria (outside Antioch), and Antioch on the Orontes.[167] Sim says,

> The Gospel of Matthew provides no explicit information of its provenance. Scholars are in general agreement that the Gospel was written in the eastern part of the ancient Mediterranean world, but their suggestions for the specific location create an arc from Antioch on the Orontes in the north, eastern corner of the Levant to Alexandria in the south-east, and include all points in between these major population centres. The absence of solid internal evidence means that the procedure for identifying the exact place of the Gospel's composition involves a good deal of educated guesswork.[168]

Many scholars conclude that the gospel of Matthew probably originated in or around Antioch in Syria. The following are typical arguments proffered to support such idea: firstly, the early allusions to Matthean traditions in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and in the Didache; secondly, the prominence of

[167] Davies and Allison 138-139.
[168] Sim 40; This same view is the view of R. T. France, 15.

Peter in some Matthean traditions combined with his known leadership in Antioch; thirdly, the reference to Syria in Matt 4:24 and fourthly the presence of a large Jewish population there; its common language is Greek and the gospel we know was written in Greek.[169] The presence of all these criteria makes it "difficult to escape the conclusion that the Gospel of Matthew was composed in Antioch on the Orontes."[170]

With this we can say that majority of scholars have the inclination of accepting Antioch as the provenance of Matthew's Gospel but they all gave some sort of caveats that the idea of Antioch as the provenance of the Gospel is not definitive but probable. That means the idea of accepting Antioch has no evidence to the full exclusion of all other suggestions.

4.1.3 Purpose of the Gospel of Matthew

There is no book or letter or even day to day conversation that has no purpose otherwise it would appear like a mad person's aimless motion. Some scholars are of the opinion that the major motive for which Matthew picks up his pen to write his gospel was to present the large sections of Jesus' teaching to the members of his community. The teachings according to them are arranged under five major headings in the gospel.

[169]Ulrich 74; This view is also held by David Sim: he says, We know that Peter was influential in the Jerusalem church prior to the apostolic council and a prominent member of the Antiochene church after the council, and there is no substantial evidence at all that he assumed a position of importance in any other Christian church in the eastern region of the Roman Empire. Antioch therefore stands as the only serious contender for the type of Petrine Christian tradition which Matthew represents. This does not necessarily point to Antioch as the provenance of the Gospel, but it is by far the most probable location.

[170]Sim, 62.

They include Matt. 5-7; 10; 13; 18; and 24-25.[171] One believes that there is a reason for the presentation of the teachings at all for the community they are meant for. The essence of presenting it to them (disciples) is to show them the mind of the one who gave them the Torah; as well as to let them know that they are the new people with the new righteousness emanating from the proper interpretation of the Torah. Putting the narratives and discourses together one discovers that Matthean Jesus attacked Israel (especially the Pharisees and Scribes) as salt that had lost its taste (Matt 21:28-22:14)); a lamp that is no longer on the lampstand and a city that is on a hill top that has remained hidden. Again the little part of the city (Matt 23) that is not hidden attracts attention to itself instead of to their "father who is in heaven" (v. 16). Hagner rightly says,

> Matthew is a community book written to a considerable extent in order to meet the immediate needs of the evangelist's church or churches during the interim period between the historical events narrated and the return of Christ. . . The evangelist intends to help his Jewish-Christian readers understand their new faith as in continuity with the faith of their ancestors, as the fulfilment of the Scriptures, and as the beginning of the realization of the hope of Israel. The author wrote, above all, (not only) for the church to interpret the Christ-event but also to instruct and edify the Christians of his own time and future generations.[172]

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[171] Daniel J. Harrington The Gospel of Matthew, Sacra Pagina Series (Minesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991) 76.

[172] Hagner LIX.

That means, the evangelist sets out to encourage the members of his community that they have not really abandoned their ancestral heritage instead they are focused more than the Pharisees and Scribes as well as other Jews that are not in their fold. This is why he greatly used OT quotations to buttress the theme of fulfilment in the gospel (1:23; 2:6, 15, 23). On the theme of fulfilment, Jesus is presented as the Christ, the Messiah who has absorbed all the functions of Moses and has even gone beyond them. This is why majority of the scholars see the audience of the Gospel as a cell-type Jewish-Christian group under pressure from orthodox Jews for alleged antinomianism. Matthew made them to understand that they are the people who will lead others to the proper understanding of the promises of the prophets and the content of the Torah. Again "the genealogy (1:1-17) fits Jesus into the literary forms and family lineage of Torah."[173] By that Jesus is presented to them as the Messiah, son of David, as well as son of Abraham (1:1).

This is the reason no doubt why Matthean Jesus has to start his earthly ministry by first of all calling followers, going to the synagogues in Galilee, teaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people (Matt 4:23). Through that means he presented himself to the crowds and the crowds were greatly amazed and that attracted to him many more people which included both the sick and the healthy (4:24). In the midst of their admiration he went to the second level of instructing his real followers by giving them the beatitudes (5:3-12). These beatitudes were really new ways of looking at the same reality or accepting the spirit of the Torah, hence the admiration of the crowd (7:28-29).

[173] Johnson, 193.

The Matthean Jesus concludes his introductive presentation by telling his followers what they ought to be in the midst of all who are outside the fold (Matt 5:13-16). The evangelist has the purpose of telling his readers that they are not only on the right direction but they have the responsibility of letting the world know the right thing and bring all into one fold. This is why Jordan says, "One of the purposes of the Sermon, then, was to present the good news of the kingdom so clearly and so convincingly that the people would repent and make the great decision. Viewed in this light, it is the most evangelistic Sermon ever preached."[174] Matthean Jesus knows why he addressed his followers in the midst of the crowds. Jesus was ostensibly addressing the crowd but in actual fact he was addressing his disciples. The purpose of Matthew therefore is to present Jesus as the authentic interpreter and fulfiller of the Torah (5:21-48) hence whoever follows him will also become the same to the rest of humanity. Just as the Torah is indestructible (5:18) Jesus' own words are indestructible (24:35), and that is why the Gospel ended with the admonition from Jesus to his followers to teach all nations "all that I have commanded you" (28:20).

4.2. Sources of Matthew's Gospel, Manuscripts and Translations

The interest here is to discover the sources which the evangelist used in producing the Gospel According to Matthew. "Within the NT study, one particular problem of Source Criticism concerns the nature and identity of the sources of the synoptic Gospels. This problem is usually

[174] Clarence Jordan Sermon on the Mount (Valley-Forge: Judson Press, 1980) 18.

known as the Synoptic Problem."[175] This problem emanates from observable relationship that exists between the three synoptic gospels namely Matthew, Mark and Luke.[176] It is observed that the three gospels have a very considerable amount of material where they run parallel to each other, and that is what is called "Triple Tradition." By this tradition, Matthew and Luke agree most often with Mark in his order of material as well as in his wordings. A good example would be Matt 5:13; though here the wordings are not the same thing but we see the nucleus of the idea in Mark and Luke but expanded by Matthew. As a result of this overlap in order of material as well as in contents, some scholars have been quick to conclude that Mark stands midway between Matthew and Luke. Statistically, Brown puts the relationship of the synoptic gospels thus, "Mark has 661 verses; Matthew has 1068 verses and Luke has 1,149 verses. Eighty percent of Mark's verses are reproduced in Matthew and 65 percent in Luke."[177]

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[175] C. M. Tuckett "Source Criticism (New Testament)" R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 646.

[176] Dietrich-Alex Koch "Source Criticism (NT)" Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 6 (London: Doubleday, 1992) 165.

[177] Raymond E. Brown An Introduction to the NT (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2000) 111. Koch has also this view thus: About 35% of the material which is contained in the synoptic Gospels is common to all of them . . . The Gospel of Mark consists of 85% of this common material, while the percentage in Matthew is 50% only and in Luke is only 40% . . . If one singles out these materials, there emerges a common order for it . . . There is a common order in all three gospels and the rest is arranged in at least two of the gospels in the same way . . . There must have been a source in which this common order of the material had once been established. Still on the level of speculation, "About 95% of Mark's material reappears in Matthew, 85% of it in Luke. Assuming Mark as the common source of Matthew and Luke, most of the omissions can be understood as resulting from the editorial aims of Matthew and Luke, respectively. See page 166.

The implication is that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark independently. Some other scholars go to the other side of the argument by saying that it was Mark who had conflated Matthew and Luke. This is to the extent that he followed them whenever two of them agreed and followed one against the other when both of them disagreed. Again it has also been argued that Mark may have used Matthew whereas Luke used Mark.[178] To emphasize the dependence of Matthew on Mark, Brown says, "Mark had been designed to make Jesus intelligible to a Gentile audience; and Matthew, in order to serve a community that was becoming more and more Gentile, found Mark a useful framework into which to incorporate Q,[179] a very Jewish collection of Jesus' teaching."[180] We cannot just deny all these as mere speculations. The fact that Mark was used by Matthew is more plausible than any other argument when one considers the contents and wordings in the gospels.

The argument that seems to have flawed the argument that Mark used Matthew is the question: if Mark had used Matthew, why would he had left out the whole important teaching of the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt 5-7). But that could also be rejected as baseless if one remembers that each of the evangelists wrote from the point of view of the need of his community. The problem of who copied from whom was solved by the so-called "Two Source Theory" or "Double Tradition" which alleges that Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark and Quelle (Q) independently. From all indications, it is most likely that Matthew worked Q material into his larger Sermons like Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and

[178] Johnson, 140.

[179] "Q" is usually seen as a hypothetical source posited to give meaning to the double tradition which we have already explained. The implication of this is that we have no direct access to it. The content of Q is estimated to be about 220-235 verses.

[180] Brown, 204.

mission discourse (10).[181] Q material is posited, therefore, to account for the agreement that exists between Matthew and Luke. But there is also another problem, apart from the materials that the three Gospels have in common and apart from the ones Matthew and Luke have in common, there is yet another set of materials that could not be seen in Mark and Luke but could only be seen in Matthew, this last set is call special Matthew (M). Some of the materials scholars group among M includes the body of special material about Peter (14:28-31; 16:17-19; 17:24-27); the story of the guard at the tomb (27:62-66; 28:2-4, 11-15), some parts of Matt 5:13-16 etc.

It follows from the above that majority of scholars argue that Matthew composed his gospel from three main sources namely Mark, Quelle (Q), and Special Matthew (M).[182] He interpreted these materials to suit the community he was writing for. This no doubt brought out Matthew's characteristic Christology (Jesus as both king and servant: Matt 1:1; 12:15-21), Jesus' attitude towards the law which has been transcended and yet remaining in force (5:38-39; 5:17-20), the way the entire gospel was presented, which is exclusive but also universal (15:24; 8:5-13). Whatever he wrote he had the theme of fulfilment in mind. This accounts for some of the distinctive Matthean ambivalences of which we have just taken note of in our previous discussions.[183] The writer discovers that Matt 5:13-16 belongs partly to the triple tradition, i.e. not only that its traces is in Matthew it is also in Luke as well as in Mark. It belongs also partly to double tradition (Q) and M material.

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[181] Brown, 117.

[182] Dennis C. Duling The New Testament: History, Literature, and Social Context (Australia: Thomson Wadsworth, 2003) 339.

[183] Stephen S. Smalley "Redaction Criticism" New Testament Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 186.

Redactionally, one discovers that Matthew, Mark and Luke have convergence in two of the following places in Matt 5:13-16: Matt 5:13 has its parallel in Luke 14:34-35 and in Mark 9:50. Luke and Matthew are closer to each other than to Mark. Both contain the expression *mōranthē* "tasteless" instead of *analos* "saltless," as in Mark 9:50. Luke and Matthew also have the passive alisthēsetai "be made salty" whereas Mark uses *artusete* "to season." Matthew and Luke also talk of discarding salt that has lost its savour. As regards the use of "taste" instead of "saltiness" by Luke and Matthew, Eduard Schweizer reasons that such may have happened because the Aramaic original was not translated precisely.[184] Secondly, Matt 5:15 (related to that is 6:22-23) has parallel in Luke 11:33-35 as well as in Mark 4:21. Every other unit of Matt 5:13-16 shall be discussed below.

Having seen the possible sources Matthew employed in his composition; let us now investigate the autograph which came from the hand of Matthew the evangelist. If the autographs of the books and letters of the Bible were to be available then there would not have been any need for textual criticism, for one would have looked for them and read from them directly so as to correct any mistakes introduced by the copyist. Papyrus sheet is what autographers used to transmit their ideas. As the volume of the book or letter increases, it affects the number of papyrus sheet that will be used. For instance, "short epistles could have been written on one papyrus sheet while Matthew would have required a papyrus roll thirty feet long."[185] A Chester Beatty papyrus which is a third century papyrus contains P^{45}. "Originally the codex (P^{45}) consisted of

[184] Eduard Schweizer The Good News According to Matthew (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975) 99.

[185] J. Harold Greenlee Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005) 25.

about 220 leaves, each measuring about 10 by 18 inches, and contained all Gospels and Acts. Today Matthew and John are the least well preserved, each being represented by only two fragmentary leaves."[186] At a point in history there was a change from papyrus to the stronger parchment, this makes it possible to have the complete books of the NT in one volume by the use of more and larger sheets; this is better known as codex.[187] In the numerical system each Ms has a different number, for instance, Codex D is 05. One of the most important uncial Mss is Codex Sinaiticus or Codex א (01) which is of 4th century origin; it contains the whole NT writings and with some potions of OT writings. "In fact, Codex Sinaiticus is the only known complete copy of the Greek NT in uncial script."[188] Another one closer to it is the Codex B (03) or Codex Vaticanus; it was written in 4th century. It contains all the books of the NT with the exception of the following books: Hebrews, the Pastoral Epistles, and Revelation. It contains most of the OT writings.[189] Another MS that is of interest to us is Codex Washingtonensis or Codex W (032). It is a 5th century Ms. It contains the four gospels in the following order: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark.[190] The above order is regarded as Western order with the two apostles first and two companions of apostles following.[191] Another important codex that contains Gospels and Acts is called "D" (Codex Bezae), which is a 6th century Ms. Codex Bezae is the principal

[186]Bruce M. Metzger The Text of The New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[187]J. Harold Greenlee Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005) 25.

[188] Metzger, 42.

[189] Greenlee, 27-30.

[190] Greenlee, 33.

[191] Metzger, 49.

authority, being supported by one other uncial, Φ, the Old Latin and Curetonian Syriac versions, and by a few copies of the Vulgate, in inserting after Matt 20:28 the long passage that instructs people on how to behave if invited to a party.[192] Similar to the above is Codex Monacensis for it contains also the four gospels in the same order. It has its origin from ninth or from the tenth century.[193] Of interest to us also is Codex Dublinensis. It consists of thirty-two leaves and preserves 295 verses of Matthew in large and broad uncials of the sixth or even fifth century. There is codex Sangallensis which also contains the four Gospels with the exception of John 19:17-35.[194] It is good to note at this point that the list of the uncial manuscripts that contain the Gospel of Matthew is not exhaustive.

After the Uncial Mss of 4th -8th century another set of Ms that emerged were the Minuscule Mss. They are greater in number when compared with the former; at least 2800 of them. They date from 9th century to later. One of the most important of them is Codex 1 which is a 12th century Ms used by Erasmus to prepare the first published Greek NT. "The designation 'Family 1' (f^1) is given to a group of minuscule Mss whose text is very similar to that of Codex 1: 118, 131, 209, 1582, and some others."[195]

Apart from Codices written with Uncial and Minuscule there are also Lectionaries. These were written to follow sequence of readings in liturgical assemblies. Lectionaries contain day to day readings in the liturgical assemblies. One that is of interest to us is the one that contains lessons from the Gospels which is

[192] Metzger, 50.
[193] Metzger, 57.
[194] Metzger, 58.
[195] Greenlee, 35.

called an "*Evangelistarion.*"[196] This *evangelistarion* does not present each of the gospels as a whole at a go but unit by unit as it affects the life of the liturgical community.

There are also versions which give us clue to NT texts. The most important version to us here is the Vulgate which is the Latin version of Greek Bible translated by Jerome. It contains the whole NT and it is the official Bible of the Latin Church and remains today the Roman Catholic Bible. The researcher is aware that there are other versions but let us limit ourselves with only the vulgate for they are all translations that emanate after the Old Latin (Itala).[197] All these texts listed above are essential to arrive nearly at the autograph of Matthew's Gospel as well as other NT texts.

Having seen the sources of Matthew's Gospel, manuscripts as well as translations that contain the Gospel according to Matthew and having seen also the beauty of this Gospel, one has no choice than to warn and affirm that, although the evangelist had recourse to previously existing materials whether written or oral in order to compose his gospel, "He did not produce a collection of glued-together sources. Working with a developed Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, he produced a highly effective narrative about Jesus that smoothly blended together what he received . . . It may be academically useful to detect the sources he employed, but to concentrate on the compositional background and miss the impact of the final product is to miss the beauty of the forest while counting the trees"[198] that make up the forest. The Gospel has what I may call two walls that tie it together so as

[196] Greenlee, 36.
[197]Greenlee deals with them in pages 38-46.
[198]Brown, 208.

to express its Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology namely Matt 1:23 and 28:20b.

4.2.1. Matthew's Gospel as Part of the Apologetics of the New Testament

We can say boldly that almost all the NT writers wrote apologetically. A very good example comes from the opening statements of Luke's Gospel (1:1-4) and Acts (1:1-2). Hence scholars like Fiorenza and Droge are of the opinion that much of the early Christian literature, including the NT, was written to promote and defend the Christian movement.[199] Another good example of recorded apology in the NT is Stephen's apology (Acts 6:11-15; 7). Paul is versed in apologetics both in his speeches and writings (Phil 1:7, 17; Acts 24:10; 25:8-16; 26:2). From all indications, it is a fact that early Christian apologists took over the method of defense of the faith from NT apologists like Peter (Acts 2: 14-37), Stephen (Acts 7); Paul (Acts 26: 28-29); and the author of 1 Peter (1 Peter 3:15).
NT writers appropriated the OT writings as necessary to prove that Christ is the messiah who was crucified or is the suffering servant of God (Isa 42-44; 49-51; 52-53; 61; Psalm 22; 31; 34; 41; 42-43; 69; 109; 118 and Zech 9-14). Matthew in his Gospel present Jesus' whole life as being in accordance with scriptures and when he talks of 'the Scriptures' he talks of the TaNaK (*Torah, Nabii'm and Ketubii'm*). He did that by expanding Jesus' statements with OT quotations (Matt 9:13; 12:5-8, 40; 21:16). Matthew even employed prophetic statements to drive his points home (Matt 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15, 35; 21:4-5). The same can be said of the Sermon on the Mount. It was a sort of refuting negative piety to show that Jesus came with the best (Matt 6:2,

[199] Droge, A. J. "Apologetics, New Testament," in the Anchor Bible Dictionary vol 1, A-C (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 302.

5, 16; 7:5) and as a superior legislature (Matt 5:17-20). All these are to prove the authenticity of Christ as the "Messiah of God." Droge writes:

> Obviously, the resurrection itself was used by Christians as an important argument of the messianic status of Jesus, predictions of it being found, for example, in Psalm 16; 110 and Jonah 1. Apparently, however, allegations were made that the disciples of Jesus had stolen his body and thus faked the resurrection. The apologetic story of the setting of the guard at the tomb of Jesus is clearly an attempt to refute this accusation (Matt 27:62-66; 28:4, 11-15)[200]

By implication we discover that there was nothing written down as part of NT canon that has no bearing on making Jesus the authentic son of God and hence the promised Messiah (Matt 13:10-15; 21:33-45; Acts 6: 11, 13; 7:51-53; Gal 3:1-29). Droge says, "The attempt to anchor Christianity backward in the ancient writings of Moses and the prophets gave the impression at least that Christianity had antiquity on its side. Thus, Christianity becomes the 'true Israel' and Christians the true descendants of Abraham (Gal 3:7, 9, 14, 29; 6:16; Rom 9: 6-8)"[201] The Apologists follow the Apostolic Fathers closely and developed and went beyond what the apologists of the NT started. The main early Christian apologists include: Justin Martyr, Quadratus, Aristides, Tatian, Athenagoras, Melito of Sardis, Theophilus and Origen.

[200]Droge, 303.
[201] Droge, 303.

4.2.2. The Literary Genre/Character of Matthew's Gospel

It is believed that once the genre of Matthew is established, then that of the Sermon on the Mount which includes Matt 5:13-16 is taken care of. That means this sub-section aims at naming the genre and sub-genre of Matthew's Gospel. Anyone who peruses through the canonical gospel notices that it contains the birth narratives, as well as the deeds, death and resurrection of Jesus. At the superscript of the Gospels one discovers the word *euaggelion.* What does *euaggelion* mean and how was it used in history? It suffices to mention here at this point that "in NT times *euaggelion* ('good announcement,' the word we translate as gospel') did not refer to a book or writing, but to a proclamation or message."[202] It is a word that has a history. It emanates from the Hellenistic world. It was used in the above background to announce good tidings like the birth of a prince, victory at battle. LXX translates the Hebrew phrase *tôv bassir* to be *euaggelion.* In OT background the word *bassir* (2 Sam 18:27; 1 Kings 1:42) also refers to news that relates to victory for instance Israel's victory in war or God's victory in the delivering of Israelites from the land of Egypt. It covers "the proclamation of God's glorious acts on behalf of Israel."[203] Following from that and other related statements of the NT literatures like the opening words of Mark's gospel (1:1); the proclamations of Jesus were presented by Matthew as *euaggelion* (4:23; 9:35; 24:14). The proclamations of Jesus are seen as good news in Luke (8:1; 16:16). In the submissions of Paul the idea of what Jesus did is seen as *euaggelion* (Rom 1:3-4, 16.) Anyone who reads the four NT books that are termed *euaggelion* discovers that they contain "Good News" of what God has accomplished for "Israelites" through Jesus Christ.

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[202] Brown, 99.
[203] Brwon, 100.

Based on the above, Matthew is of course "Pre-eminently a Gospel, i.e. an account of the life of Jesus, an ancient type of biography though not a biography in the modern sense. It is increasingly realized that the Gospel according to Matthew is a *bios* (life) that bears sufficient resemblance to Greco-Roman biographies to be classified as such. . . Fundamentally, a Gospel proclaims the good news concerning the saving activity of God."[204] Brown lists some qualities that differentiate Gospels from Greco-Roman biographies. He talks of the Gospels' "anonymity, their clear theological emphasis and missionary goal, their anticipated ecclesiology, their composition from community tradition, and their being read in community worship."[205] The implication of this is that in as much as Gospels are a sort of biographies (Gospels of Matthew and Luke have infancy narratives) they are unique types.

So in its general outlook Matthew is a Gospel but within that Gospel we have so many sub-genres. Hence, the text of Matthew is an omnibus of genres because the following sub-genres can be discovered in it namely, history, myth, moral instruction, apocalyptic teaching, liturgy, allegories or metaphors, parables, and apologetics. This means that, in analysing it, no one method should be exclusively employed: the multiplicity of genres in Matthew calls for flexibility in method and aim.[206] The variety of options concerning the genre of Matthew points to its multifaceted character.[207]

Davis and Allison quoting C. Moule as regards Matthew's literary characteristics say that, the evangelist was an educated person with a good command of sound Greek with a

[204] Hagner, LVII.
[205] Brown, 103.
[206] Davies and Allison, 3.
[207] Hagner, LIX.

considerable vocabulary; but he derived much Semitism, and perhaps some Latin, from his sources; and he also had some feeling for Semitic 'atmosphere', occasionally introducing a Semitism on his own account, though less historical than Luke.[208] It therefore employs the literary forms typically found in OT and ancient Near Eastern Wisdom books. This view seems to be a consensus opinion among scholars though not all scholars.

Clearly the hand of one author is active throughout the Gospel. There is no sign that two authors were writing. Secondly, devices such as foreshadowing (chapter 2 foreshadows the passion narrative), repetitions (Abram was the father of Isaac, Isaac . . .)[209], and inclusio (5:2 and 7:28; 5:17 and 10:34). The beginning and end hang together (Matt 1:23; 28:20) as do the various parts that make up the whole; this shows the impressive unity of the gospel. Many theological themes are constantly reiterated. Thirdly, the literary characteristics like Chiasmus, and inclusio, the use of numbers and of frequent repetition, and the numerous Semitisms, and Septuagintisms are all evidence of a mind steeped in the OT and Jewish tradition.[210]

In Matthew's Gospel there are formula quotations and theme of fulfilment. There are about 10 to fifteen instances where Matthew made such references especially in his citation of OT to substantiate his argument: "All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet who said" (4:14, etc). This is seen as Matthean peculiarity among the synoptic gospels. Matthew has five discourses and each of them is concluded

[208] Davies and Allison, 72-73.
[209] Revised Standard Version (RSV) 1971.
[210] Davies and Allison, 96.

with a marker which varies slightly from one another for instance, "When Jesus finished all these sayings" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1). Each of the discourses is introduced by the above phrase.

Still on the character of the Gospel, Harrington making a sort of comparison between the Sermon and Wisdom literature says, "Given Jesus' (and Matthew's) roots in Judaism and the Jewish character of his teachings, a better analogy can be found among the wisdom instructions in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon."[211] According to him the sage uses various literary forms for instance, the beatitudes, proverbs, commands and prohibitions often accompanied by reason for such commands and prohibitions, general principles, parables, and so on. There is no extended argument or logical development of an idea. Instead the sage moves rapidly from topic to topic, sometimes only on the basis of key words or catchwords. The content embraces general principles, attitudes, and actions. Therefore following the above characteristics we can say rightly that the Sermon on the Mount is "wisdom instruction."[212] It employs the literary forms typically found in OT and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom books. The Sermon on the Mount freely mixes general principles, such as love of enemies (5:43-48) and the Golden Rule (7:12) with parables, exhortations, examples, declarations, and so on. Therefore Sermon on the Mount (5-7) is a Jewish Wisdom Instruction in form and content.

It is the metaphorical aspect of the Sermon that will really occupy us as seen in Matt 5:13-16. In Matt 5:13-16 there are two metaphors with threefold explication which are the

[211] Harrington, 283.
[212] Harrington, 284.

metaphor of salt (13a) and its explication (v 13bc), which are: descriptive affirmation, question and answer. The remaining two explications and a metaphor are seen in Matt 5: 14-16. These are the metaphor of light (v 14a); explication of light with a city on a hill top (v.14b) and explication of light with the idea of lamp on a lamp-stand (Vv 15-16). The genre of our text (Matt 5:13-16) therefore is the sub-genre of metaphor which Umoren rightly calls the "explication of the *captatio benevolentiae*,"[213] (it starts from Matt 5:3-12 and ends in v 16). These are the summary of literary characteristics of this Jewish oriented gospel.

4.3 Interpretive and Exegetical Issues in Matthew

Here we consider/examine briefly the interpretation of Matthew in the course of recent history. We shall group this according to interpretive methods.

4.3.1 Literal Interpretation

Literal interpretation is one of the most ancient methods of interpreting a biblical text. It was very popular in the first century. It is the exact opposite of Allegorical interpretation which talks of deeper and hidden meaning of every text[214]. It was also popular in the medieval hermeneutics where it represents one of the four senses of Scripture given to a text along with allegorical, moral (typological) and anagogical sense.[215] The progressive movement from biblical texts to abstract religious knowledge began with literal, historical meaning. Scholars like Lanfranc, Abbot of Bec (d. 1089),

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[213] Umorem, 125-139.

[214] Andrew Louth "Allegorical Interpretation," R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, Eds. A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 12.

[215] Richard N. Soulen Hand Book of Biblical Criticism (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) 176.

Berengar of Tours (d. 1088), Drogon of Paris (Late eleventh century) and Bruno the Carthusian (c. 1030-1101) promoted the use of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic in literal interpretation, techniques that were especially evident in the exegesis of the school of Laon at the turn of the eleventh to twelfth centuries and in the work of its most important teacher, Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), and Lobrichon (d.105).[216] Specific representative of this method in the interpretation of Matthew is not evident beyond the general application to all books of the NT of its time.

Literal interpretation means "by the letter," taking certain written words in their face value. It concentrates mainly on the "Letter" rather than on the context. Such interpretation no doubt distorts the meaning of the text concerned. If the literal meaning of a text refers to precisely what the words state, then the implication is that all the figurative languages, metaphors, parables, irony, hyperbole and others will be misunderstood and if misunderstood then the text will lose its meaning. As a result of this, this method was rejected in the early church because it distorts the biblical text it is applied to.[217] The implication of the above is that some passages of the Bible like Gen. 1 must not be literally interpreted without distorting the biblical text, for instance, Origen was accused by Eusathius of interpreting 1 Sam 28 literally thereby distorting the passage; even at that there are passages that must necessarily be interpreted literally, it is only the context of the text that will guide the interpreter. For example "lamp" as used in Matt 5:15 is literal and must be interpreted as such. "When people claim

[216]Donald K. McKim ed. Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters (England: Inter- Varsity Press, 2007) 18.

[217]Frances Young "Literary Meaning" R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, Eds. A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 401.

to accept the Bible literally, what they think they mean is that they are not prepared to question the truth of the history the Bible purports to tell."[218]

Origen is one of the foremost scholars who made use of literal method in the interpretation of a biblical passage. He was followed by others like Martin Luther but Luther was not as radical as the Anabaptists. Luther for instance in 16th century, called for the interpretation of Scripture according to its literal meaning (*Sensus Literalis*). Even when he called the Epistle of James an "epistle of straw" and wished that the book of Revelation had never been written, he was making literary (value) judgement which should not be.[219]

But as it affects the Sermon on the Mount, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin are inclined to allegorical interpretation for they claim that Matt 5-7 represents the true interpretation of the Law of Moses which had been obscured in Judaism and whose ceremonial aspects had been wholly transformed in Christian life and worship. As a result they stood in opposition to the radical Anabaptists who claimed not only that the Sermon on the Mount is a clear development beyond the Law of Moses but also that the Sermon should be interpreted literally. By such a stand they assume that Christians should never swear oaths, never use violence, and never hold office as a judge or ruler (5:34, 39; 7:1). Hence their stand forced them out of secular government completely.[220]

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[218]Young, 402.

[219] Soulen, 113.

[220]Graham Stanton "Sermon on the Mount" R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, Eds. A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 626.

This method we have seen has a lot of short comings and as such cannot adequately interpret Matt 5:13-16 that is made up of two metaphors and three explications. From what we have said above, it is clear that not to interpret metaphor as metaphor and parable as parable means misunderstanding of an author of a text.

4.3.2 Historical Interpretation

This is an interpretation that is based on the fact that a text is the product of an author and an author is a product of an age. Every author uses words that have meanings within his environment. "No one speaks from nowhere" is true to every author. Therefore every word used by an author is historically, culturally and geographically bound and as such words have meaning within epoch, culture and background.[221] No one can interpret a text or know the meaning of a word properly without knowing the context in which it is used.[222]

This method of interpretation at a point in the history of biblical interpretation replaced *Sensus Plenior* (Fuller meaning) interpretation which was hitherto popular among catholic exegetes. In the context of Matthew's gospel, the development of historical critical method in the eighteenth century led to a thorough investigation of the origins and distinctive features of the four canonical Gospels namely

[221]A white man who learnt Igbo was asked to translate the following sentence: "Anyi jere oriri na be Igwe, nni bu onye rikata ogba ba oso." He translated it thus: "we went for a feast in the house of the King, food is when you eat small, you run." That is a total misunderstanding of the statement which supposes to mean: "We went for a feast in Igwe's palace, and there were plenty to eat."

[222]W. Randolph Tate ed. Biblical Interpretation, An Integrated Approach (Massachusetts : Hendrickson Publishers, 1989) 19.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.[223] Historical interpretation gained wider acceptability among Catholic exegetes because it does not struggle to level down the theological differences by subordinating the OT Christologically and ecclesiologically to the NT.[224] It allowed each text to stand on its own. So the maintenance of a historical sense does not mean that we read the Bible merely as a witness of the past.[225]

In the nineteenth century, through this method, it was discovered that the Gospel of Mark was the foremost gospel and was seen as a literary source upon which the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were based.[226] This knowledge gave rise to two source hypothesis which explains why in certain passages of the synoptic gospels we see materials that are common to Matthew and Luke but are not in Mark (Double Tradition/Q) as well as materials that are common to all three synoptic gospels (Triple Tradition). This explains, even today, the interrelatedness of the synoptic gospels and by implication the sources of the gospels. With the introduction of the Two Source Hypothesis, the Matthean priority gradually lost its popularity and relevance in modern NT interpretation.

The period immediately after 1945 is particularly important for the modern interpretation of Matthew. This is a period when influential works that affected variously the modern

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[223]John H. Hayes, (ed) New Testament: History of Interpretation (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004) 2.

[224] Brian Mcneil "Sensus Plenior" R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, Eds. A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (London: SCM Press, 1990) 622.

[225] Armando J. Levoratti "How to Interpret the Bible" The International Bible Commentary (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2004) 23.

[226] Carl R. Holladay "Biblical Criticism" Harper's Bible Dictionary (Bangalore- India: Theological Publications, 1994) 126-133.

interpretation of this Gospel emerged. For instance, in a lengthy and thorough study of the setting of the Sermon on the Mount in early Judaism and in early Christianity, Davies in 1964 cautiously suggested that the Sermon and indeed the whole Gospel was a kind of Christian counterpart to aspects of the reconstruction of Judaism that occurred at Jamnia following the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. [227] This method is still very relevant in the study and interpretation of Sacred Scripture.

4.3.3. Redaction Criticism

Though part of Historical Critical Method, redaction critical method dominated the interpretation of Matthew for more than thirty years. It started with the pioneer work of G. Bornkamm in 1948 which is on the stilling of the storm pericope (8:24-27; 14:22-33). He assumed that Matthew made use of Mark as his source and thus Bornkamm paid close attention to the additions, modifications and omissions the evangelist made as well as the different context in which the text had been placed. With this he was able to discover, just like every other redaction critic, that Matthew did not just hand down the Markan story but he gave it his own theological bent. The work by G. Bornkamm gave way for a number of redactional studies of Matthean themes or sections of the Gospel and all of them point out Matthew's use of Mark to meet the need of his community.[228] This does not mean that every scholar accepted Markan priority. But be it as it may, Markan priority remains the basis of most Matthean scholarship in the last decades of the twentieth century. Also the criticism of Q as one of Matthew's sources has been very vigorous. M. Goulder in 1974, for example claimed that apart from a handful of oral

[227] Hayes, 3.
[228] Hayes, 3.

traditions Mark was Matthew's only source. For Goulder, Matthew used Midrashic method and freely expanded Mark for liturgical purposes. The method he propounded was welcomed but that it was meant for liturgical purposes has been severely criticized. He also published another book in 1989 to defend his view that Luke used Matthew, Mark and Q. Contrary to his view, in their multi-volume commentaries on Matthew, U. Luz (3 vols. 1985, 1990,1997), J. Gnilka (2 vols. 1986, 1988), and W.D. Davies and D. Allison (3 vols. 1988, 1991, 1997) accept that Matthew used both Mark and Q and that redaction criticism remains the most fruitful way of uncovering the evangeliser's purposes but not without some caveats.[229]

4.3.4 Literary-Critical Interpretation.

This method is also prominent in the study of Matthew's Gospel. This method takes several forms like Structuralism, Narrative Criticism and Reader-Response Criticism. In 1987 D. Patte published a full structuralist commentary of Matthew concerned with the evangelist's faith rather than with the Gospel's first-century settings. For him, since the evangelist says what he likes and what he does not like, among other things, attention must be paid to the narrative oppositions in the text. Structuralist and narrative critics are less interested in the historical context of Matthew than in the ways the text elicits the reader's response. It was Kingsbury's book of 1986 that anticipated the use of reader-response criticism in Matthean scholarship. In the same way Howel in 1990 used "selected aspects of narrative criticism and a type of reader response criticism" in order to increase appreciation of the way Matthew's narrative shapes one's experience of the story. On the other hand G. N. Stanton in 1992 claims that although modern literary theory is stimulating and helpful, precedence

[229] Hayes, 4.

must be given both to the literary conventions that influenced the Evangelist and to the expectations of his first-century readers. In other words, interpretation of a text cannot be carried out in isolation from consideration of the social setting of its readers.[230]

4. 4 Theology of Matthew's Gospel

The Torah was given to Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai and it is the study of this Torah that occupies them every Sabbath in the synagogues. Matthew's Gospel presents Pharisees and Scribes as the interpreters of Torah at the time of Jesus. The way they go about it made Jesus to enter into numerous polemics with them (Matt 23 especially verses 2-3). Hence Jesus was presented in the Gospel as the authentic interpreter of Torah; as one who knows the mind and spirit of the Torah or the one who owns the Torah. Hence Jesus is presented by allusion as the new Moses who surpasses the original Moses though the Gospel did not pursue this fact far.

The scenario Matthew painted makes one to understand that the Torah was not properly delivered hence he came with the proper presentation of Torah as one who came from the giver of the Torah (5:21-48; 16:16). To make the situation clearer, Jesus is presented as the fulfilment of Torah (5:17-20) and personification of Torah. In Matt 5:18 Matthean Jesus says, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not a dot, will pass from Torah until all is accomplished." In 24:35 he says of his own words, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away," thus equating his words with that of Torah. Finally, in 28:19 he mandated his disciples to make disciples of all nations by teaching them "all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you till the close of the age." What he commissioned them to teach is his new interpretation of Torah

[230] Hayes, 5.

which has the attribute of new righteousness.[231] Matthew was not only interested in what Jesus did as we see in Mark but also very much interested in what Jesus said as well.[232]

The central theme of Matthew's Gospel is the theme of fulfilment. Here, the emphasis is that God has a plan which he brings to fulfilment in our present time through the coming of Christ (Messiah). Hence "Matthew knows a mighty God, one who is ceaselessly active and who works his sovereign will – the living God (16:16; 26:63)."[233] This is clearly shown from the beginning of the Gospel through the genealogy. This genealogy is made up of three high points namely Abraham (recalls God's dealings with the patriarchs), David (recalls all that the "sons of David" means) and the Exiles (a significant reminder of judgment which is one of the themes of Matthew).[234] The genealogy also embraces Jews and Gentiles, saints and sinners, as well as both males and females hence abhorring discriminations of all sort and presents Jesus as a universal king or one who is interested in all mankind without an exception (Matt 1:1-17).

> In Jesus' person and work there is the fulfilment of the OT which is visualized above all as the concrete expression of God's salvific will. Matthew cites the OT 41 times and of these, 21 citations are common to Mark and Luke, whereas the remaining 20 are exclusively proper to the first Evangelist; 10 of these quotations are not found in any of the books of the NT. The fulfilment formulae (example 1:22, "All this

[231] Johnson, 203-204.

[232] Leon Morris New Testament Theology (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1986) 114.

[233] Morris 118.

[234] Morris 116.

took place to fulfil what the Lord has spoken by the prophets") occurs 31 times in Matthew.[235]

Matthew paints a picture of Jesus in his gospel which shows that flesh and blood could not easily comprehend him unless through divine assistance (16:18-19). The new community being gathered around Jesus has the power to loose and bind; God ratifies the community's decisions (18:18). Members of this new community are special group hence their righteousness should surpass that of the Scribes and the Pharisees (5:20). They must be different from the rest they are going to influence by not only avoiding sins but also by avoiding occasions that might lead to them. So "Righteousness means the believer's fulfilment of God's holy will as made known and radicalized by Jesus (5:21-48)."[236]

Without entering into a detailed comparison between the theology of Matthew and that of Mark, let us point out that Matthew is far reverential than Mark in presenting the deeds and words of Jesus as well as the way he presents the disciples of Jesus. To achieve this he has to omit some of the Markan details or presentations for instance he omits the accusation that Jesus was beside himself (Mark 3:21). On the side of the apostles he most often omits reference to the ignorance and bewilderment of the disciples (Mark 9:6, 10, 32) instead he likes talking about their privileged position (Matt 13:16-17 par Mark 4:13.) Matthew believes strongly that God is interested in the affairs of mankind and that is why he takes time to record such events as: the dreams of Joseph (1:20; 2:13, 19,22), the Magi (2:12), Pilate's wife (27:19), the coin in the fish's

[235] K. Luke The TPI Companion to the Bible, Vol. II NT (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1994) 15.

[236] Luke, 15.

mouth (17:27), Pilate's washing of his hands (27:24), the earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and the rising of the dead at the crucifixion (27:51-53).[237]

K. Luke summarily gives the theological perspective of Matthew's Gospel thus:

> Matthew is first and foremost a Christian believer who has given literary expression, through his Gospel, to the faith in Christ, the son of the living God (16:16), the Messiah promised by God in the Scriptures, who will save his people from their sins (1:21). This salvation can be obtained only in the Church of Christ (16:18-19; 19:17-18), and that too solely by those who produce the proper fruit (21:43).[238]

Matthew therefore used all his sources (Mark, Q and M) to arrive at the above facts. All that he says in the Gospel was to arrive at the above goal he set out to pursue.

4.5 The Structure of the Matthean Gospel

As regards the structure of Matthew, scholars vary so much but each scholar has a reason for taking a particular stand. There is therefore no generally accepted structure of the Gospel. Each reader or scholar proffers his or her own structure for easy access to the gospel.[239] Hagner for instance sees the arrangement of Matthew into sections as something designed for easy memorization. According to him,

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[237] Morris 114-115.

[238] Luke, 14.

[239] R. T. France The New International Commentary on the NT, The Gospel of Matthew (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2007) 2.

> To a very large extent, the shape of the sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew reflects the parallelism and mnemonic devices of material designed for easy memorization. It is estimated that 80 percent of Jesus' sayings are in the form of *parallelismus membrorum*, often of the antithetical variety . . . In its Aramaic substratum, the teaching of Jesus regularly contains such things as rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and paronomasia and the evangelists especially Matthew try sometimes to reflect these phenomena in Greek dress.[240]

The implication of this is that the Gospel of Matthew was not arranged as it came from Jesus whose opinion the evangelist claims to portray, but arranged according to themes as desired by Matthew so as to meet the goals he wants to achieve for his community. Even at that there has been little or no consensus as to the best structural arrangement of Matthew's gospel. This is because one notices a variety of structures in this gospel which may not be grouped together easily.

Some scholars talk of fivefold structure based on the five discourses of the gospel. The discourses include the Sermon on the Mount (5-7); Mission directives given to the twelve (10); Parables of the kingdom (13); discipleship and discipline (18); and finally, eschatology (24-25). Some commentators suggest that the evangelist intends the fivefold structure to correspond to the Pentateuch where Jesus is seen as the new Moses and the giver of a new law.

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[240] Donald Hagner Matthew 1-13, World Biblical Commentary Vol. 33A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub. 1993) XLVIII-XLIX.

The fivefold discourse does not contain the narratives, they stand on their own. There are therefore five narratives which appear alternatively with the discourses. On that Hagner says, "Although these five discourses may be meant to include in each instance a preceding narrative (i.e. chapters 3-4; 8-9; 11-12; 14-17 and 19-22), the fivefold structure hardly seems adequate to be considered the basic plan of the Gospel. The main reason for this is that certain parts of the Gospel do not fit into this structure at all."[241] The parts that do not fit into both narrative structure and discourse structure include the infancy and passion narratives which must be relegated as a prologue and epilogue. Yet we know that the passion narrative is the goal and climax of the story, so it is indispensable in any structure. Chapter 11 is outside the fivefold discourses; Chapter 23 does not easily fit in as part of the eschatological discourse.[242] The implication of all these is that no one structure seems to capture the whole structure of the gospel. Others suggest that the Gospel can be arranged in a chiastic scheme namely the alternation between the narrative and the discourses thus:

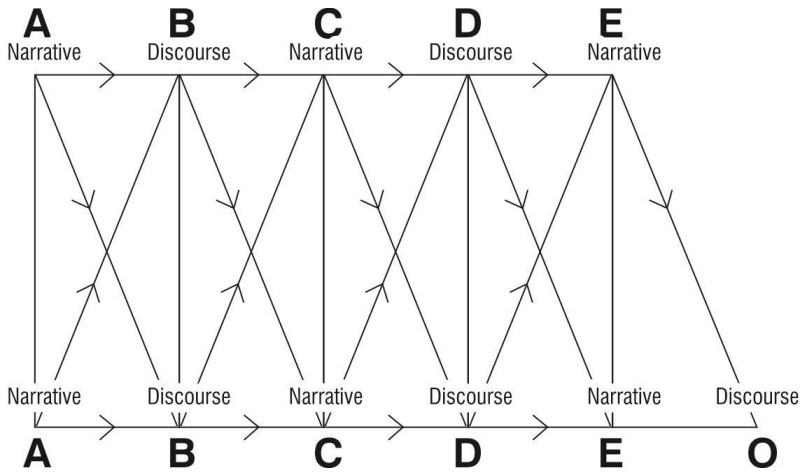
Chiastic Diagram of the Gospel According to Matthew

1	2
A. Chapters 1-4 Birth and beginnings (Narrative)	A.[1] Chapters 26-28 Death and rebirth (Narrative)
B. Chapters 5-7 Blessings, entering the kingdom (Discourse)	B.[1] Chapters 23-25 Woes, coming of the kingdom (Discourse)
C. Chapters 8-9 Authority	C.[1] Chapters 19-22 Authority

[241] Hagner LI.
[242] Hagner LI.

and Invitation (Narrative)	and invitation (Narrative)
D. Chapters 10 Mission Instruction (Discourse)	D.[1] Chapter 18 Community (Discourse)
E. Chapters 11-12 Rejection by this generation (Narrative)	E.[1] Chapters 14-17 Acknowledgement by disciples (Discourse)
O. Chapters 13 Parables of the kingdom (Discourse) [243]	

Pictorially, this can be represented thus:



[243] Davies and Allison 60; Hagner LII; Warren Carter "Learning to Live as Faithful Disciples" The Bible Today, Vol. 36, No. 5, Sept/Oct, (Liturgical Press, 1998) 288.

With that we have A A^1; B B^1; C C^1; D D^1; E E^1; and O. The chiastic structure has exposed the fact that fivefold discourse structure of Matthew should be taken as a subsidiary structure rather than the primary one.[244] Though it gives us a more comprehensive structure because it combines the narratives and discourses alternately, there is yet other convincing structures which appear to be even more embracing which some scholars hold unto. Some scholars argue that there are three fundamental structures in Matthew which are introduced with two pivotal points in the gospel that are noted with the repeated clause: *apo tote ērzato ho Iēsous* "From then Jesus began" (4:17; 16:21). The threefold structure emanating from that includes: Introducing the person of Jesus the Messiah (1:1-4:16); Jesus' ministry to Israel, which include teaching, preaching and healing as well as Israel's response (4:17-16:20) and the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah which started with his journey to Jerusalem (16:21-28:20). No matter how attractive the above appears, some scholars still see how difficult it is to separate 4:17 from 4:12-16 as well as 16:21 from the verses that precede it.[245]

Having studied some of the structural arrangements of Matthew's Gospel proffered by different scholars, one is inclined to support, accept and to work with a six fold division of the Gospel based on the kernel[246] of the Gospel as proposed by scholars like Jack Dean Kingsbury, Frank J Matera, and Hagner. A close look at this six-fold structure which follows reveals that they are almost the same thing with the threefold

[244] Hagner LI.

[245] Jack Dean Kingsbury The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, (49/2, 1987) 65; Frank J. Matera The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, (49/2, 1987) 253; Hagner LI.

[246] Kernel is nothing but the indispensable themes that serve as a foundation for all others.

division except that the six fold structure breaks everything down into specific units though not to the barest units. The six fold division based on the kernel include: firstly the coming of the Messiah (1:1-4:11); secondly, the Messiah's ministry to Israel which are three fold- preaching, teaching and healing (4:12-11:1); thirdly, the crisis in the Messiah's ministry which appears as the Israelites definitive rejection of the message of salvation (11:2-16:12); fourthly, the messiah's journey to Jerusalem (16:13-20:34); fifthly, the death of the Messiah and resurrection (21:1-28:15); finally, the great commission (28:16-20).[247]

Taking our cue from the six fold structural division of Matthew, our interest in this Gospel lies in the second part which is the Messiah's ministry to Israel, the ministry that involves preaching, teaching and healing (4:12-11:1). We are going to break this kernel into its constituent parts below so as to study in detail Matt 5:13-16. When we look at the five discourses arranged in the gospel of Matthew, our interest in the gospel lies in the very first discourse which is the Sermon on the Mount (5-7). It is this section that will be occupying us below.

4.5.1. Matt 5:13-16 in the Context of the Sermon on the Mount

Matt 5: 13-16 is located in the Sermon which spans from chapter 5 to chapter 7:29 of Matthew's Gospel. The Sermon on the Mount can be divided into five constituent parts namely, the introduction (5:1-20); the antitheses (5:21-48); the three acts of piety (6:1-18); other teachings of Jesus (6:19-7:12); and

[247] Frank J. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel" Catholic Biblical Quarterly 49/2, 1987, (245-246) 238.

finally, warnings about judgment (7:13-29).[248] Our interest in this study is not on the entire Sermon but on the very first section which is the introduction- 5:1-20. This introduction (5:1-20) to the Sermon contains yet fourfold division or sections namely, the setting that prepares the ground for the entire Sermon (5:1-2).[249] Secondly, the beatitudes (5:3-12),[250] Thirdly, Jesus gives the identity of his followers; the essence of discipleship (5:13-16). In this section, to address them, he employs the second person pronoun, plural, vocative case "Oh! You. . ." (5: 13-14). And fourthly, Jesus makes his stand on the Law and the prophets known to the crowd and precisely to his disciples (5:17-20). Probably, this is to provide them the reason why they have to continue to follow him since he came for the fulfilment of the Law and the prophets. Jesus emphasizes that his coming is to ensure the continuity with the old though with a difference.[251] Continuity with the past does not mean *status quo* but it means, an involvement with the past in a way that surpasses it. This fact is expressed deeply in Matt 5:21-42.

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[248] Harrington The Gospel of Matthew 76.

[249] To understand this setting well one has to read 4: 23-25, this gives one the picture of the crowds that followed Jesus and motivated him to feel that the appointed time for his teaching had come.

[250] A closer look at the beatitudes reveals that 5:3-10 has the third person plural pronoun – autoi/autōn (they) which most likely signifies that Jesus was speaking generally to the crowds that gathered around him. But as from vv11-16 Jesus uses the second person plural pronoun, which signifies that Jesus is becoming specific. In verse 11 he employs humas which is the second person plural pronoun, accusative case; it is v11 that gives meaning to verse 12; whereas in verses 13 and 14 though he uses second person plural pronoun he goes over to the vocative case plural humeis (You!).

[251] Harrington, 82.

We have exposed above that Matthew's Sermon on the Mount consists of five parts namely the introduction (5:1-20) and the rest. The introduction (5:1-20) divides itself into four sections. Our attention is on the third part of the introduction (5:13-16), where Jesus defines the identity and the corresponding responsibility of his followers. Here there are two metaphors namely, *humeis este to halas tēs gēs* "You are the salt of the earth" (5:13a); and: *humeis este to phōs tou kosmou* "You are the light of the world" (5:14a).

In the context of Sermon on the Mount (5-7), Jesus let his followers to know what he really wants them to be for the world and earth (Matt 5:13-16). The Sermon on the Mount begins with an exordium or poem intended as a *captatio benevolentiae*, which would dispose the audience to listen to the rest of the Sermon with goodwill towards the speaker. The Sermon begins by affirming and consoling those in the crowd who are poor in spirit (5:3-12). As the *captatio benevolentiae* progresses Matthean Jesus employs two parallel metaphors to describe his audience (5:13-16).[252] In the context of the Sermon therefore, Matt 5:13-16 makes one to be aware that Jesus was not teaching an anonymous crowds; instead he was teaching the people he invited to follow him for the sake of the task for which he came (Matt 4:18-22). This idea is made explicit by the fluctuation of the pronouns in 5:3-16, from 3rd person plural *autoi/autōn* (which most likely signifies that Jesus was speaking generally to the crowds that gathered around him) to 2nd person plural *humas* (which signifies that Jesus is becoming specific therefore emphasizing those the instruction is meant for). Matthean Jesus was really addressing all but with emphasis on those he called, hence the pronoun employed fluctuates from the crowd to the disciples/followers

[252] Umoren, 125-139.

of Jesus.[253] Matt 5:13-16 gives meaning to the introductory part of the Sermon and the entire Sermon. Matthew locates 5:13-16 within the sermon and it came immediately after those beatitudes which bless the disciples when they are persecuted (5:11-12) so that in their mission and witness "those persecuted by the world are nevertheless the world's salvation."[254] "Jesus teaches the beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12) to the disciples who are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (Matt 5:13-16).[255]

Sequel to the above, Matt 5:13-16 comes after Jesus must have set forth his mission to provide entry into the kingdom of his Father (Matt 5:3-10) and after he must have prepared his disciples for persecution, insults and all kinds of suffering for his sake (Matt 5:11,12).[256] He then goes on to tell them what they are supposed to be before the world so as to fulfil their responsibility. It presents the disciples as the new people of God who will teach others who are not yet members of the community the new righteousness.

4.5.2. Delimitation of Matt 5:13-16

This section examines the remote and immediate contexts of Matt 5:13-16. Verses 11-16 form an *inclusio* because of the second person plural pronoun. This stand seems to be

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[253] Umoren in the above mentioned article emphasizes that the audience of the sermon were the crowd that followed him from 4:23-5:1 and because of the reaction of the crowd on 7:28. But one discovers that the crowds followed because of the healings and teachings they have enjoyed. Jesus saw them and taught his followers in their midst.

[254] John R. Donahue The Gospel in Parable (New York: Fortress Press, 1990) 121

[255] Brown, 179

[256] Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa, "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace" Instrumentum Laboris (Vatican City: 2009) Nos. 34, 35.

contrary to the general opinion that 5:3-12 is a unit of its own. Matt 5:3-12 is a unit because it deals with the beatitudes. But a closer look at Vv 3-12 reveals that Vv 3-10 is more together than Vv 3-12 this is because Vv 3-10 has 3rd person plural pronoun whereas Vv 11-12 in union with Vv 13-16 has *humōn* which is second person plural pronoun. Vv 11-16 is a unit because Vv 11-12 like Vv 13-16 speak of the sharp contrasts between the disciples whose virtues are extolled in Vv 3-10 and other people. The *humōn* of v. 11 is also seen in v. 16 thus forming an *inclusio*.

Furthermore, if not that Matt 5:11-12 rightly belong to 5:3-10 in content, one would have linked the structure seen in 16:17-19 with 5:11-16. This is because in 16:17-19 there is benediction (16:17), there is bestowal of a name (16:18), and there is also commissioning or giving of responsibility (16:19). Comparing it with what we have in 5:11-16, in 5:11-12 we have the benediction, Vv 13-15 is the bestowal of name (salt, light) and verse 16 is the commissioning or responsibility. Though some scholars take 5:11-12 as introduction to 5:13-16 and not part of the Beatitudes[257] the present writer wants to treat 5:11-12 as part of the beatitudes because of the serious affinity between it and 5:3-10 as a result of the presence of the word *Makarioi* in verses 3-12 which is not so in verses 13-16. Verses 13-16 present us with the identity of Christ's followers as well as what ought to be their responsibility towards the rest of society. It tells us that the disciples are the light (salt) of the world through their good work; this good work has to be done in such a way that attention will be directed to God and not to themselves. This unit (5:13-15/16) has a parallel in Matt 16:17-19 where we notice description and responsibility, that is. "You are . . ." and a new commission.

[257] France, 171.

4.5.2.1 Remote Context of Matt 5:13-16

The remote context of Matt 5:13-16 is the arrest and persecution of John the Baptist and the call of the disciples. The persecution of the prophets was an established feature of the Jewish people's memory. This idea was alluded to by Stephen in his speech that led to his death in Acts 7 (esp. Vv 51-53); it was also alluded to in Hebrews 11:36-38. This is stated in general terms in 2 Chron 36:16 and Neh 9:26. This idea is also variously presented in OT for instance, Jeremiah's persecution is eloquent enough to buttress this point (Jer 20:10; 26:10-19; 36-38, etc.) even Jeremiah's contemporaries (Jer 26:20-23; 1Kings 18:4; 19:1-3; Amos 7:10-12). Jesus, apart from the appearance of this idea of persecution in the presentation of the Sermon on the Mount, incorporates the theme of persecution in the parable of the vineyard (21:34-36) and develops it in 23:29-36. The implication of all that is that those who have spoken out for God have always been liable to the violent reprisals of the ungodly. In the light of that heritage, to be persecuted for the sake of Jesus is a badge of honour (Matt 5:11).

As a result of the above, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested (4:12) he knew already the implication of that. He had to start his own ministry bearing in mind what will happen to him also at the appointed time (16:21). Jesus bearing in mind that he could not reach the whole world/earth alone, needed followers on whose hearts he would write his message hence he started by calling followers (4:18-22). These followers (disciples) he intends to make like himself so that they can make others like him too. The phrase, "The prophets who came before you perhaps suggest that Jesus' disciples are now the prophetic voice on earth (Cf. 10:41; 23:34). The call to accept persecution with joy is now followed in 5:13-16 by a series of images which explain why it is important that

disciples should both be different and be seen to be different"[258] from the rest of mankind.

So the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) where 5:13-16 is located portrays Jesus teaching and disposing his called followers on what may befall them in the world or human society and what they should hope to gain should they raise their heads high despite all odds. Therefore Jesus bearing in mind the type of task he wants to assign to his disciples, identifies them as he says, *humeis este to halas tēs gēs* "You are the salt of the earth. . ." (5:13); and: *humeis este to phōs tou kosmou* "You are the light of the world" (5:14). . . (15-16).

4.5.2.2. Immediate Context of Matt 5:13-16

We have established above that the remote context of 5:13-16 is the arrest of John the Baptist, the influence it has in the psyche of Jesus and the Jews as explained above. The arrest of John the Baptist made Jesus to begin his public ministry immediately, bearing in mind that there is no time to waste. It was also clear to Jesus that if he must make any deep impression that will be lasting, he must select few people who must learn the message and make such available when he is no longer there. He knew the mindset prevalent in Judaism as it affects the interpretation and application of the Torah. It was clear to him that their interpretation, application, and living out the Torah have a lot of flaws; anyone therefore who claims to have the better way of doing the interpretation and application will most likely have his blood spilled. He needed people who would be very close to him and stand as witness as he corrects the wrong interpretations and wrong applications of the Torah. This idea is self evident in some chapters of the gospel especially in Matt 23. But he needed to make the

[258] France, 173.

chosen courageous and aware of what awaits them in the nearest future, hence, the beatitudes.

As from Matt 5:13-16 the discourse turns from a general statement about the good life (Matt 5:3-12) to a specific address to the disciples gathered around Jesus on the hillside. Because they have committed themselves to follow Jesus and so to adopt the new values of the kingdom of heaven, they are now going to stand out as different from other people.[259] So, following the beatitudes which is introductory is a statement concerning the ethical demands of the kingdom, the very essence of discipleship. These are, in short, 'kingdom-ethics-instructions so that all those who are recipients of the kingdom are to live in the world.[260] The Beatitudes follow Matt 5:13-16 directly; and are part of the introduction to the whole Sermon which aims at preparing the hearers of the Sermon. To clearly present the immediate context of Matt 5:13-16 Davies and Allison say,

> The reader is not told how to be salt or light. This is because 5:13-16, as a general description or superscription, stands above the detailed paraenesis proper. It is a transitional passage in which the speaker moves from the life of the blessed future (5:3-12) to the demands of life in the present (5:17-7:12), in which the theme switches from gift to task, and in which those who live as 5:17-7:12 will direct are summarily characterized. In short, in 5:13-16 descriptive names are bestowed upon those who live as the Sermon on the Mount demands.[261]

[259] France, 171.
[260] Hagner, 97.
[261] Davies and Allison, 471.

By the above submission we have seen that Matt 5:13-16 stands as a transitional passage between the promised or future blessings and the life in the present. 5:13-16 therefore summarizes the characteristics of those who are going to live the content of the rest of the Sermon. The immediate context of Matt 5:13-16 is the instruction of the followers of Jesus which is shown in the promised life of blessedness.

4.6. Textual Criticism of Matt 5:13-16

On the study of the textual problem of the above passage we shall rely on the Greek text: Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th edition by Nestle- Aland. A closer look at the text reveals that Matt 5:13-16 has been relatively well preserved for it has only three textual problems in verses 13, and 16. In verse 13 we have an omission and an alternative reading, while in verse 16 we have also a sign of omission.

In verse 13 there is the omission of *eti* (adverb meaning "still, yet, even") by the following manuscripts D, W, it, $sy^{s.c.p}$, Cyp. Though these are old manuscripts but they are not as old as those that are behind the Greek text as recorded by Nestle-Aland. Its presence in that verse is for the sake of emphasis but never superfluous as those witnesses are trying to show by its omission.

Still in this verse, there is also an alternative reading of the phrase *blēthen ezō* "being cast out" or "having been thrown out" by a great number of manuscripts like P^{86c}, D, W, Q, f^{13}. They have *blēthēnai ezō kai* "to be thrown out and." This is an infinitive. *blēthen ezō* is attested to by the following manuscript which are more ancient than the ones against it: original edition of P^{86*}, א, B, C, f^{1}, 33. 892 p^{c}. It literally means, "having been thrown out." ***B****lēthen ezō* is aorist, passive participle from the word *ballō*. But the alternative reading

would be of major theological significance within the text if it were to be the original; for it tells us what would happen if the insipid salt is thrown out on the ground.

In verse 16 there is an omission of the word *erga* "works" by the original edition of *Vaticanus* (B^{*}). Perhaps this omission may be as a result of homoioteleuton (i.e. the repetition of endings in words, similar sound. It is also known as rhyme). But it can be implied by the adjective kala, "good" (deeds, things, works). The writer prefers the addition of *erga* to its omission. It makes more meaning with the adjective *kala*. However, these omissions found in verses 13 and 16 have no theological import to the text as such. It is no exaggeration to say that they add little or nothing to the meaning intended by the evangelist though their presence ensures proper understanding.

4.6.1 Literary Translation of Matt 5:13-16

Here we want to attempt a working literary translation of Matt 5:13-16; this will incorporate the textual criticism carried out above.

Greek	Translation into English
5:13 Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἁλισθήσεται; εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει ἔτι εἰ μὴ βληθὲν ἔξω καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.	"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste (become tainted), how shall its saltness be restored? It is no longer good (strong) for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men."
5:14 Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· οὐ δύναται πόλις	"You are the light of the world. A city set on a

κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη·	mountain cannot be hidden."
5:15 Οὐδὲ καίουσιν λύχνον καὶ τιθέασιν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν, καὶ λάμπει πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ.	"Nor do they (people) light a lamp and place it under the bushel but on the lampstand and it lightens all in the house."
5:16 Οὕτως λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα, καὶ δοξάσωσιν τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.	"Thus, let your light shine before men so that they may see your good works and glorify your father in the heavens."

4.7 Semantic of Matt 5:13-16

In this section, we intend to find out the meaning of some words as they are used in the context of Matt 5:13-16, we feel that such will enhance the understanding of the text. Such words include: *humeis* (Vv 13a and 14a). The one linguistic feature of Matt 5:13, 14 is the prominence of *humeis* which is personal pronoun, nominative plural from *su.* Generally, Greek does not usually include personal pronouns in addition to the person indicated by the verbal inflection unless there is need to emphasize the person as we have above. The emphasis is for the disciples not to feel that the message was not addressed to them directly. The speaker had never wanted to put them in doubt of whom he means. In Greek grammar, if the pronoun comes first in the sentence, the emphasis is unmistakable. It looks either redundant or uncharacteristically pompous: "You yourselves!".

Another verb is *mōranthē* (v 13) which is 3rd person singular; first aorist passive subjunctive mood. It is from the Greek

word *mōrainō* meaning "to make foolish," "to become foolish", "to play the fool," or to be an "imbecile." The context requires that *mōrainomai* here means to lose the distinctive character, but neither Greek nor English can adequately represent the probable Aramaic pun involved.[262]
In verse 13 where it appears, it refers to something that is made up of a "low grade", "sub-standard," "tasteless", "an insipid", "tainted", "impure" salt. By implication, *mōranthē* stands in paradigmatic relation with all the above words (i.e. elements that can be substituted for each other). As it is used in the text, it refers to salt that has lost its value or standard. It refers to the tasteless and insipid salt. The evangelist was very careful on the selection of his words; he knows what he means and says that. He did not mean absence of salt for if he had meant that then he would have used another word – *analos* (Ezek 13:10; 22:28) where it means without salt, or absence of salt. The situation that is expressed in the text is a situation that admits the presence of salt but unfortunately the qualities of being salt were not there with the seeming substance. *Mōranthē* can be used for a foolish one who claims to be wise, that is, one who is foolish and not aware of that and claims to be what one is not (I Cor 1:20; Rom 1:22).

Salt stands in syntagmatic relation to taste (i.e. one element selects the other element either to precede it or to follow it). This is the reason *ean* is used to introduce *mōranthē*, to show that salt becoming insipid is not something very common. The implication is that both are chained together, for it is really unheard of that salt could become tasteless. The evangelist therefore was not affirming the absence of salt but that salt is there physically but not actually what it appears to be in substance. Another extreme side of it is illusion which can be

[262] France, 170.

exemplified with the scientific term mirage which one sees on a sunny day on a coal tar which signifies the presence of a pool of water, but when one comes very close, one discovers that there has never been any water on the road. In a simple language, physically, salt could be noticed but the quality that makes it salt is lacking, that means what is physically salt is deprived of salt content (Mark 9:50; Mat 5:13b; Luke 14:34). For instance, snow or sugar though whitish cannot stand for salt.

The only salt that can depreciate in quality is an impure salt. A pure salt as such does not admit of any impurity. The salt of the Dead Sea is described as such hence, "Salt produced by natural evaporation on the shores of the Dead Sea is never pure; when dampness decomposes it, the residue is useless."[263] Another important verb that adds extra meaning to the text is *halisthēsetai* (v 13). It is used as 3rd person singular, future passive indicative mood, from the root *haliszō* meaning "to salt," "to make salty," "to return something to its original status," "restoration," "to replenish," its passive is "to be salted". This verb is employed in a rhetorical question: if salt loses its quality as salt, how can its quality be restored? It is like asking, how could a soul return to a lifeless body? The saltness of salt cannot be handled. It is more of the spiritual aspect of the salt. Once it vanishes, it cannot be restored. That is what the evangelist seems to be asking. From the tone of the context, it is absolutely impossible to replenish or recover a desalted salt. Once salt becomes saltless no one deems it good for anything again. The uselessness of a desalted salt is expressed in verse 13c.

[263]Frederick William Danker (ed.) A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature 3rd Ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000) 67.

There is yet another word that is employed to express the fate of a tasteless salt, that word is *isxuei* this is also third person singular, present indicative active mood. It comes from the word *isxuō* meaning to be able, to be strong. This word in biblical tradition implies to 'be in possession of one's physical powers, be in good health (Matt 9:12; Mark 2:17). Secondly, and, most especially, in the context it was used by the evangelist here in Matt 5:13: 'to have requisite personal resources to accomplish something; have power, be competent, be able' (James 5:16; Phil 4:13 as well as Matt 5:13).[264] But that word cannot be properly understood in the context in which it is used here unless one considers the adjective *ouden* that comes before it and the adverb *eti* that comes after it. The three words are in syntagmatic relation. They give meaning to each other. This context makes *isxuei* appear as if it is a polysemic word (i.e. word that has more than one meaning depending on the context). Salt, therefore, which has lost its strength or power is useless.

Following from the above, the implication is that any salt that no longer meets the standard to be called salt is useless; it is no longer strong as it ought to be. In the same way, any natural object that is as natural as it is supposed to be then that object is strong, but if it is wanting from its purposes then, it is no longer strong. Therefore, the situation this verb portrays is the situation in relation to the natural quality of any object in question. In our own case in this verse, it refers to salt that is no longer strong, that is, it is no longer as it came from the hand of its creator; or salt that has lost its natural status.

The evangelist uses yet another verb that also points to the fate of a useless, insipid, or tasteless salt. The word is *blēthen:*

[264] Danker, 484.

first aorist passive participle, nominative singular neuter from the root *ballō*. It means to throw away or cast away. The presence of the word *hezō* emphasizes that an insipid salt has the chances of being cast out or thrown out. *Hezō* is added to *ballō* for the sake of emphasis. The word *ballō* is used variously in the NT tradition to mean: 'to cause to move from one location to another through the use of forceful motion, to throw' (Mark 4:26; Luke 13:19). These are all positive uses. It is used to show how worthless salt, bad fish and even refuse (Matt 5:13; 13: 48; Luke 14:35) are treated.[265] It is on this negative use of this verb that the evangelist employs it in this verse. That verb therefore is used for things that are not working according to their nature.

There is yet another verb that portrays the fate of an insipid or tasteless salt- *katapateisthai,* it is present, passive, middle infinitive from the root *katapateō*. This tells us that the insipid salt will be cast out along the path where humans pass and it shall be trodden under their feet, to tread down, to trample upon. Anything that can be trodden upon is nothing but a useless object, a rejected object; for no one matches on the valuables. Anything that is thrown out by the owner indicates that that thing is no longer serving the owner the desired purpose. In the same way, an insipid salt is no longer salt as portrayed in our text.

This verb (*katapateō*) as used by the evangelist was used in the ancient church to express the fate of the penitents especially those who were ready for reconciliation. It means to tread so heavily as to injure, trample under foot by animals[266] because

[265] Danker, 163.

[266] Max Zerwick A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1996) 10.

they do not know the value of what they were trampling on (Matt 7:6; Luke 8:5); throwing away because the thing being thrown has no value anymore (Matt 5:13). In Matt 7:6 and Luke 8:5 something valuable is treaded upon as a result of the ignorance of the one doing it, whereas in Matt 5:13c the tasteless salt is treaded upon not as a result of ignorance but as a result of what the salt has become. Therefore, for salt to become tasteless is to invite "a casting away treatment," and subsequent being trodden upon.

In verse 14 we see a verb that ordinarily should not have anything to do with light. That verb is *krubēnai* - which is 2nd aorist passive infinitive from the word *kruptō* meaning "to hide," its passive means "to be hidden" or "to be concealed". Experience teaches that light cannot be hidden. If one thinks of lighting a candle or kerosene lamp and hiding it, one knows that it is as good as extinguishing the light. To hide a lighted lamp or candle means to put it out of use. A hidden light therefore is no longer serving the purpose which it is originally meant to serve. Those who were listening to Jesus must have imagined what a hidden lighted oil lamp would look like. The author is of the opinion that it is a waste of energy to light a lamp and hide it at the same time. It is a useless venture to do a thing like that. A hidden lighted oil lamp is no longer serving its purpose hence it is useless. Its uselessness can be compared with the uselessness of a tasteless salt.

In other NT texts this word was also used literally and figuratively. For instance, *kruptō* literally refers to something that is kept hidden, that is, from being seen (Matt 25:18, 25; 13: 44; Luke 13:21; John 12:36; Rev 6:15-16). Figuratively, it applies to a situation of being withdrawn from sight or knowledge, to hide, keep secret; to keep something from being divulged or discovered (Matt 11:25; Luke 18: 34; 19:42; 1 Tim

5:25). One thing is certain, all the above objects that are described as things that can be hidden can remain hidden for sometime but light can never remain hidden at all even for a second without people knowing that there is light somewhere. The impossibility of the hiddenness of light is again exemplified with the parable of a city on a hilltop that can never be hidden either in the night or day time (Matt 5:14b). Matthew employs two objects and gave them qualities that are not readily associated with them. He associates salt with the idea of becoming tasteless and associated light with the possibility of not giving its light as a result of its hiddenness.

Verse 15 brings the verb that is really associated with the nature of light. The verb is lampei – which is 3rd person singular, present indicative active mood from the word *lampō* meaning "to shine," "to lighten." "Light" and "shine" stand in syntagmatic relation with one another. "To shine" is the main and known quality of light. A light that does not shine or lighten is no light at all. This is a fact to the extent that if one is in a room with light, and if there is no light again outside that room but darkness, then that room must never be hidden from any angle, all must be seeing that room from every direction. Therefore it is the quality of light to shine and not to be hidden. Sun, diamond, precious stones, lamps (Matt 5:15), lightening, flash (Luke 17:24), moon, stars, the face of the transfigured Jesus (Matt 17:2), the light that shone forth at creation by God's command (Gen 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:6a)[267] these are all associated with light and the act of shining out. Sun is the major source of light in the world. According to scientists, the moon and the stars and indeed all luminous objects like diamond, reflectors of all sorts and precious stones have no light of their own, they only reflect in the absence of the source of light the light they had received when the source was still

[267] Danker, 586.

available. Jesus' face at the transfiguration was reflecting the glory of God (Matt 17:2) just as Moses' face was when he came down from Mount Sinai (Exod 34:29, 30, 35).

In verse 16 we see a verb that applies the quality that is inherent in light to the disciples. That verb is *lampsatō*- which is 3rd person singular, 1st aorist, active voice, imperative mood from the word *lampō*. This indicates that the disciples should let the light which they have received from God through Jesus to shine so that people will see the light and praise their father who is in heaven.

Let us at this juncture consider the interconnectedness of words to each other in Matt 5:13-16 or the relationship of words to each other. The relationship which the writer establishes here will enable him to take a firm decision that Matt 5:13-16 is a unit.

All the words used in Matt 5:13-16 are interconnected and even connected to the other parts of the Gospel, hence they can even help to remind the reader what the purpose of the Gospel is. Some of the words that come to mind are the following: *gēs* -'earth' (5:13), *kosmou* -'world' (5:14), *oikoumenē* -'inhabited earth' (Matt 24:14), *holō tō kosmō*| -'the whole world' (Matt 26:13), *ethnē* -'nations' (28:19). These do not signify people of various nationalities living in or near the evangelist's home city. The evangelist apparently expected this Gospel of the kingdom to be proclaimed to an ethnically diverse audience throughout the known world.[268] That means, when Jesus characterized his disciples as light and salt of the world and earth respectively it does not mean that they were that only in Palestine but far beyond. By that the entry into the kingdom

[268]Ulrich, 67.

can only be achieved through faith in Jesus and no longer on the basis of Jewish race. The days of the chosen race seems to be over. God's people are now all those who believe and accept the new righteousness from whatever race (Matt 8:11-12; 28:19-20).

Again, the second person emphatic pronoun plural - *humeis* used in verses 11-16 makes us to see Matt 5:11-16 as a unit, but the content makes us to take only Vv 13-16 to be a unit instead of the other way round. The address in Vv 11-16 is in the second person plural not only because more than one person is being addressed, but because it is the corporate impact of the disciple's community, as an alternative society. The hilltop town of Matt 5:14 is a symbol, not of a conspicuous individual but of the collective impact of a whole community.[269] So the word *humeis* is a sure guide that the text was not referring to individual disciples but to all disciples as the light and salt of *tou/ kosmō*. It is the presence of those addressed with the word *humeis* that provoked all other things that followed in the Sermon as a whole; even though the writer does not neglect the influence of the crowd that gathered around Jesus (4:25-5:2) before ever he opened his mouth to teach.

The other two important words that connect the whole Matt 5:13-16 are *halas* -'salt' (5:13) and *phōs* -'light' (5:14). These two metaphors put verses 13-16 into a unit and make it more meaningful. Without the two symbolic terms those verses would have been empty and without focus. For Matthean Jesus, in order to make them (Jesus' followers) to understand the enormous responsibility he was giving them, he uses two

[269] France, 171.

natural elements, 'salt' and 'light' metaphorically to address them.

These two natural elements (salt and light) are in constant struggle in the world to assert themselves as what should be preferred to their opposites namely insipidness and darkness. These two elements suffer greatly and sometimes forego their physical property so as to remain relevant. Salt for instance can never be seen as salt in any food yet its influence is a *sine qua non* for the appreciation of the food. Suffice it also to mention at this juncture that Matt 5: 13, 14 which are part of Matt 5:1-20 provides the basis for the whole Sermon (5:21-7:29). All of them are meant to dispose the original Jewish members of the Matthean community who are to accept the teaching brought by Jesus the Messiah as what ought to be preferred to the ones being provided by the Pharisees and Scribes.

Matthean Jesus in Matt 5:13-16 uses words that are familiar to his audience. The two principal words of this unit are *halas* -"salt" (5:13) and *phōs* -"light" (5:14) which have a lot to do with the background where both the evangelist and Jesus grew up. Hence, the metaphorical use of salt and light in this passage has a lot of connotations in the psyche of Jesus' hearers and the members of the Matthean community.

It is therefore imperative to mention here that salt is not something very uncommon in the minds of the members of the Matthean community. It is an everyday material in every household. This is because salt was used in those days for very many purposes which include: flavouring foods, seasoning or preservation as a result of the crudeness of the technology then, it was also used in religion as material that seals contracts and even in social functions, such as to seal friendship. And to

make the matter more interesting in those days, any contract sealed with salt is considered permanent and unbreakable.

Thus, "Being possessed of purifying, perpetuating and antiseptic qualities, salt became emblematic of fidelity and friendship among eastern nations."[270] The implication of all these is that both Jesus and his hearers were fully conscious of what salt stood for in their daily lives and relationships in the society. So salt is not an abstract object in the ancient world in general and among the Jews in particular. The only situation that may seem a little bit confusing among them is where Jesus talks of salt becoming *mōranthē* "tainted" or "corrupt" and asking how shall it be *halisthēsetai* -"salted." In the mind of the hearers, a tainted salt has depreciated in value and in use; its fate therefore would be to be thrown away. In their minds it would be an impossible task to think of re-salting a depreciated salt if it is possible at all for salt to depreciate in value.

The other word *phōs* 'light' (5:14) is also as common as the first in the background of Jesus' hearers. Light has always been seen as a symbol of orderliness and absence of confusion. In that connection God is the principal source of orderliness and straightforwardness (Gen 1:3). For it is in the creation of "Light" that orderliness becomes the basis of creation. What existed was a state that was shrouded in darkness, mess, corruption and confusion (Gen 1:1-2)- [271] *tohu wabohu*. In both OT and NT tradition light is most often used to portray the manifestations of the divine (Exod 10:21-23; 13:21; 14:20; Matt 17:2; Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13). The Johannine Jesus

[270] W.E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1997) 987.

[271] No English word has been able to give the proper interpretation of those Hebrew words; the above translation is nearest to the original intent of the biblical tradition from which we inherited that.

crowned it all by being identified as such and identifying himself as the light of the world and promises that whoever that follows him would never walk in darkness (John 1:4, 7-9; 8:12; 12:35ab, 36ab; 1 John 2:8).

The fact that the text was silent about the reactions of the disciples when they were identified as the "light of the world" shows that they must have welcomed it though not without some fears bearing in mind the level Jesus was raising them. Even the use of lamp as source of light is very common in their psyche. They know the importance of lamp in their bedrooms and living rooms. The only surprise they would have faced was to imagine the picture of a light that is covered. For it seems unimaginable to think of a covered light in the context Matthean Jesus was talking. The words he used were not foreign or abstract to those who heard them, instead those words made them to appreciate what Jesus really wants from them and why he called them to be his followers. The connection of these words together reminds us that Jesus was calling his followers to be to the world what light is to the world and what salt is to food.

Salt and light are parallel to each other in the context of Matt 5:13-16. For both of them in the metaphorical sense make the disciples to be exemplary in the world. Salt and light are parallel to each other just as world and earth are parallel to each other.

4.8. Content of Matt 5: 13-16

As we established above, there are two metaphors in Matt 5:13-16. The metaphors divide Matt 5:13-16 into two parts namely verse 13 and verses 15-16. Davies and Allison divide Matt 5:13-16 into two metaphors (vv 13a and 14a) and three parables. The three parables are divided into two major

sections. Section one contains a parable and is found in verse 13 whereas section two contains two parables and is located in verses 14-16. Each section is introduced by the emphatic second person personal pronoun, plural namely *humeis* which ushers in the metaphors.[272] In this book we shall not be looking at them as three parables and two metaphors but we shall look at Matt 5:13-16 as made up of two metaphors as already explained above. The analysis here depends on the literary translation of 5:13-16. Having seen the content of our text, let us at this stage consider the redactional organisation of Matt 5:13-16.

Matt 5:13 has parallel in the other two synoptic gospels (Mark 9:49-50; Luke 14:34-35), it is likely that it is a Markan material. A close look at the synopsis reveals that the relation between the three accounts is anything but exact equivalence. Mark and Luke are more closely related than with Matthew. There is nearly verbal equivalence in the affirmative expression in Mark 9:50ab and Luke 14:34ab. Both Mark and Luke have "salt is good" but Matthew adds "You are the salt of the earth." The same thing is obtainable in Matt 5:13b, Luke 14:34b and Mark 9:50b; that is, Mark and Luke are more closely related. Mark and Luke used the verb *artuthēsetai* while Matthew used *halisthēsetai* which is future passive from the Greek verb *alizō* meaning "to salt, to make salty," or "to be salted." Davies and Allison are of the view that, "The Lukan text demonstrates that Matt 5:13b parallel Luke 14:34-35 derives firstly from Q, not Mark 9:50. We are thus led to postulate a Markan and Q overlap: both Mark's source and Q had the saying about salt becoming bad, Mark in an abbreviated version."[273] In Matt 5:13 it is the disciples that are

[272] Davies and Allison 470.

[273] Davies and Allison 474.

looked upon as the salt of the earth, whereas Mark 9:50ab and Luke 14:34ab refer to salt as salt, i.e. there is no figurative reference in them. The implication of this is that in Matt 5:13 salt is metaphorically used in relation to the disciples of Jesus, but it was not so used in both Mark 9: 50a and Luke 14:34a. In Matt 5:13a one suspects the "M" material. Matt 5:13c is equivalent to Luke 14:35 whereas Mark has no equivalence to that at all. Hence one suspects the "Q" materials.

Verse 14 has no equivalent in either Mark or Luke, instead it has affinity with Phil 2:15 and John 8:12, hence that must be another case of "M" material in Matthew. In verse 15 Matthew has a closer similarity with Mark 4:21 and Luke 11:33-36. Verse 16 has no equivalence in any of the synoptic gospels hence it is part of the special "M" material in this first gospel. This verse of Matthew has parallel in 1 Peter 2:12. From the context of Matthew, one discovers that Matt 5:13-16 just as Mark 9:49-50 is a direct instruction to the disciples[274] whereas Luke 14:34-35 is a general statement aimed almost at no one in particular. We therefore, reiterate that Matt 5:13-16 is made up of two metaphors used to identify the disciples which are made explicit with examples of insipid salt, city on a hill top and lamp on a lamp stand. All that are discussed above can be seen represented in the table below.

4.8.1 Synoptic View of Matt. 5:13-16

Matt 5:13-16	Mark 9:50; 4:21	Luke 14:34-35; 8:16; 11:33
13. (a)You are salt of the earth. (c^1)But if salt loses its taste, what can	50. (b)Salt is a good thing, (c^1)but if salt has become insipid, how can you make	14:34. (b)Salt is a good thing. (c^1)But if salt itself loses its

[274] Johnson, 199.

make it salty again? (d)It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled under people's feet. 14. (a)You are light for the world. 14. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. (c^2)No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand (a)where it shines for everyone in the house. 16. In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.	it salty again? (a)Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another. 4:21. He also said, (c^2)'Is lamp brought in to be put under a tub or under the bed? Surly to be put on the lamp-stand?	taste, what can make it salty again? 35. (d)It is good for neither soil nor manure heap. People throw it away. 8:16. (c^2)No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, it is put on a lamp-stand (a)so that people may see the light when they come in. 11:33. (c^2)No one lights a lamp and puts it in some hidden place or under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand (a)so that people may see the light when they come in.

The letter 'c' reveals Triple Tradition (what Matthew, Mark and Luke have in common with all their nuances); the letter 'd' indicates Double Tradition or Quelle (what Matthew and Luke have common with all their nuances and which Mark has no knowledge of); The letter 'b' indicates a situation in Triple

Tradition where Mark and Luke agree against Matthew; finally, the letter 'a' reveals the Peculiarities of the three Synoptic Gospels (i.e. special Matthew and Luke as well as Mark).

4.8.2 The Metaphor of Salt (v. 13a)

Metaphor is "a word that is literal in the contexts within which it is usually found and is taken out of those contexts and used in a context of some other kind."[275] In Psalm 119:105 the psalmist says that God's word is "a lamp to my feet." Taken at face value this statement is false; that is, obviously a word cannot really be a lamp. Nevertheless, in another sense it is true, for God's word and a lamp to light one's path are similar. These two concepts share an area of commonality or intersection: they both gave guidance, keep one from stumbling, and dispel darkness. Ordinarily a metaphor illuminates, clarifies, or completes an abstract idea by replacing it with something observable, familiar, concrete; and the effect of the metaphor may vary according to how much commonality there is between the abstract idea and the object. With this in mind, let us consider the descriptive affirmation of Matt 5:13a and 14a.

Jesus said to his disciples: *humeis este to halas tēs gēs* (v. 13a). The above metaphorical statement came as a sort of warning to the disciples against scandal and half-hearted discipleship.[276] The emphatic second person plural pronoun *humeis* makes it clear that Jesus has turned directly to his disciples which means, it is the disciples alone who are the salt of the earth. It is their task and responsibility alone but since the idea of being the "Salt of the Earth" means making others to be "Salt" too,

[275] John Gabel and Charles Wheeler, The Bible as Literature: An Introduction (New York: Oxford University, 1986) 47

[276] Donahue 121.

then it means that this characterization involves those that will become disciples through them (Matt 28:18-20).

In the Gospel of Mark and Matthew there is always a distinction between the teaching meant for the disciples alone and the ones meant for the general public, whereas in Luke everything is public. What that means is that in both Matthew and Mark there is a distinction between private teaching and public teaching as it affects the disciples and the crowds. In Luke therefore, one can say, there is no distinction between the use of the word disciple as it affects the inner circle of disciples and the crowds who are with Jesus in certain occasions. For instance, Mark 9:50 as quoted above is addressed to the disciples just as Matt 5:13-16 was addressed to the disciples whereas Luke 14:25-34 is a public address.[277] In Mark and Matthew, the reference is to the disciples whereas in Luke it is to the crowds.

We have already enumerated many qualities of salt and its various positive uses in our definition of terms but we have not really said anything as regards its negative qualities and uses. Salt in its purifying and preservative qualities may be viewed as something that is against unwanted life. It is good to note that "Meat preserved with the help of salt is not fit for food as such; it must first be treated to remove most of the salt. Moreover, Salty earth (soil, ground) is not fit for cultivation. Furthermore, salt water is not fit for drinking."[278] It was thus used for the destruction of lives that are negative or put in a place where obnoxious lives are not wanted to grow. Abimelech "Razed the city and sowed it with salt" (Judg 9:45). The sowing of salt to the earth increases the salinity of the soil

[277] Albright and Mann CXXXVII.

[278] www.biblepages.web.surftown.se/eo14b.htm, April 19th, 2009.

and hence causes aridity. Salt in this context is associated with barrenness and infertility, surely among the worst curses for land or people in the ancient Near East.[279] In Deut 29:22-23 Moses using the nature of land with high salinity describes to the Israelites how their city would appear if they break the covenant they entered with God. In that sense, salt encourages what should be encouraged and destroys what should be destroyed (Job 39:6; Psalm 107:34; Jer. 17:6; Zeph. 2:9). This points to the fact that in the Ancient Near East, "Salt also performed a variety of symbolic functions, its meaning frequently shifting between opposites of blessing and a curse, destruction and restoration, protection and harm."[280]

What is not yet clear is what salt means in the context of Matt 5:13a. The reason behind this is that *halas* appears only once in the gospel of Matthew. Hence, on the specific natural quality of salt which the text means, scholars emphasize that it is difficult to decipher the real meaning bearing in mind that salt has numerous natural qualities which include preserving, purifying (2 Kgs 2:19-23), seasoning (Job 6:6), and even fertilizing quality. There is also the possibility of using salt as a metaphor for wisdom (Mark 9:50c; Col 4:6) as well as numerous associations like sacrificial usage such as mixing it with incense (Exod. 30: 35; Lev 2:13a; Ezek 43:24); it dispels evil (Ezek 16:4), covenantal usage (Num 18:19; Lev 2:13b). From the point of view of covenantal usage, salt represents Israel. The prophets are the proponents of Israelite covenantal relationship as far as OT tradition is concerned. In the NT it has been suggested that the disciples are seen as being in prophetic succession, and thus like their OT counterparts stand

[279] Salt as a Blessing and Curse in Ancient Times. http://www.jhom.vom/topics/salt/magic.htm.

[280] Ibid.

as covenant witnesses and guarantors (Matt 5:3-12).[281] In its purifying qualities for instance, Elisha is presented in 2 Kgs 2:19-23 as one who performed a miracle by using salt in order to purify bad and undrinkable water so as to make it drinkable. From the analysis above, one discovers that all the qualities and uses attributed to salt are inherent in salt to the extent that one cannot mention salt in isolation of any of these functions and qualities. So to talk of salt is to talk of all those functions and qualities. We cannot therefore impose only one kind of quality or usage to salt as mentioned by Matthean Jesus in his address to his followers.

In as much as one can say that Matt 5:13a is figuratively used just as in Col 4:6, we find meaning in the opinion of Donald Hagner who says, "Plausible arguments can be made for each of these associations in explaining the present salt metaphor, but to emphasize a single association is to surpass the text itself and to allegorize it."[282] His argument is that since knowing the specific natural quality of salt Jesus had in mind then and the quality the disciples had in mind is difficult to arrive at without over stretching the verse, then "it may be best simply to take the metaphor broadly and inclusively as meaning something that is vitally important to the world in a religious sense, as salt was vitally necessary for everyday life."[283] This view is corroborated by Davies and Allison as they say,

> While it would make sense to affirm that the disciples are, for example the world's wisdom, it would also be reasonable to think that the pure in heart (5:8) purifying the world . . . that Jesus' followers preserve the world, or that they

[281] France, 174.
[282] Hagner, 99.
[283] Hagner, 99.

> are willing to sacrifice themselves . . . But, as is implied by two facts, the ambiguity of 'salt' need not trouble; for salt was probably equivocal and multivocal for our evangelist . . . it would appear, then, that salt is, like light, a symbol which should not be delimited to any one referent. The disciples, like salt, have several characteristic qualities, qualities without which they would cease to be what they are and instead become useless.[284]

No quality or usage of salt is more important than the other; hence all its functions and qualities are part and parcel of what makes it what it is. Food without salt is sadly insipid and even a sickening thing. Disciples are to the earth what salt is to food. They lend flavour to life in the earth. The implication of this is that since salt is very vital to the day to day life of mankind here on earth, Jesus expects his disciples to be vitally important and indispensible to the world in their witness to God and his kingdom (Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35; Col 4:6); even when their life is in danger they ought to remain faithful (Luke 12:51-53).

The implication of all these is that the disciples of Jesus are supposed to be relevant just as salt is relevant in almost all aspects of human life. Salt has the quality of giving flavour to insipid food; it is also capable of destroying life. Disciples are needed as moral guide in socio- political and cultural life of every community. They are supposed to encourage what should be encouraged and denounce what should be denounced. Their relevance in the society lies only in the fact that they are salt and remain salt in both season and out of

[284]Davies and Allison 473.

season. The idea of being salt goes with enormous responsibility. They were called to preserve the society around them from moral decay. Barclay quoting Plutach so as to elaborate what Christ means when he addresses his followers as "the salt of the earth" (v.13) says ,

> Meat is a dead body and part of a dead body, and will, if left to itself, go bad; but salt preserves it and keeps it fresh, and is therefore like a new soul inserted into a dead body. So then salt preserves from corruption. If the Christian is to be the salt of the earth, he must have a certain antiseptic influence in life . . . The Christian must be the cleansing antiseptic in any society in which he happens to be; he must be the person who by his presence defeats corruption and makes it easier for others to be good.[285]

Sirach 39:26 identifies salt as one of the essentials for human life. The world cannot as a matter of fact cope without it. In the same way Jesus is saying that disciples are no less essential to the well-being of human life here on earth. "The disciples are to provide flavour to the world they live in. . . and /or they are to help to prevent its corruption. The two ideas are not incompatible; disciples are to make the world a better place. 'The earth' . . . thus represents the sphere of their influence."[286] Jordan puts in another dimension in the interpretation of Matt 5:13a. For her, Jesus

> did not call his followers salt to describe them or to point out their saving and savouring abilities- he did that with the beatitudes. He

[285] Barclay 119-120.
[286] France, 174.

> called them salt for but one purpose- to warn them that they can lose their power to salt. When this happens, men will no longer bother to persecute Christians. They will do something even worse; they will dump them out and go on about their business.[287]

This idea brings out the paradox of the message which stems from the idea of the persecuted being the rescuer of the persecutor. Most likely, that paradox is solved when one remembers that what is important is persistence. If the persecuted remains consistent then the persecutor may eventually become the persecuted. The case of Paul comes to mind here (Acts 7:58-8:3; 9). As salt of the earth, the disciples must be meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, be merciful, must remain always pure in heart, they must be peacemakers, and honest. In short, they have to be Christ-like everywhere they see themselves.

There is no passage of the scripture where Jesus condemned any profession, what he condemns is the attitude of people in their various fields of endeavour for instance, he was against lawyers not as a profession but as of such exalted position, Pharisees and Scribes as the lawyers and interpreters of law, chief priests, Levites, the sellers of the sacrificial animals in the temple and sacrificial animal inspectors. He condemned the greed of the people who perform these functions. In the same way the present day disciples are not being called to abandon their fields of endeavour but to sanctify them and make them godly.

> The image of "salt of the earth" looks to the disciples as the active means of transforming the

[287]Jordan, 40-41.

> places where their sisters and brothers live. In effect, just as salt changes the flavour of food to which it is added, so Christ's disciples are called to live in their local surroundings in such a way as to improve the flavour of humanity. Just as salt dissolves and becomes invisible, the initial impact of the disciple's life escapes notice. However, it is in this way that the world will taste the transforming effect of the disciple's presence.[288]

That the disciples are the salt of the earth (v 13) means according to Chrysostom that, "All human nature was rendered unsavoury and corrupt by sin."[289]

Still on the same verse, 13a, we have *tēs gēs* 'of the earth'. Scholars vary as what the speaker meant. In biblical tradition *gē* has the following nuances in meaning and application: soil, earth, ground as we can see in Matt 5:18; 10:29; 13:5, 8, 23; Mark 8:6; Luke 6:49; 13:7; J 12:24; Col 1:16; Heb 6:7; 2 Pet 3:13. It can also stand for the (dry) land as contained in Mark 4:1; 6:47; John 6:21; Act 27:39,43-44; it can also mean land, region, country as in Matt 2:6; Mark 15:33; Act 7:3f, 6, 36. It also stands for the inhabited earth Luke 21:35; Act 1:8; it is taken as the locale of people, humanity as in Luke 18:8; Rom 9:28; Rev 14:3.

It is to this last option that most scholars subscribe to and which this book interprets *gē* to mean. So when Jesus refers to his disciples as the salt of the earth, he means that they are the salt of humanity. He was not thinking of the uninhabited part

[288] Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa, No. 37.
[289] Chrysostom On Matthew's Gospel (Homily 15, 6.7).

of the earth or animal kingdom though we know that if the inhabited earth is taken care of all the other parts of the earth will equally be alright. So *gē* refers to the inhabitants of the earth. This is a case of synecdoche where a part represents the whole. Such usage is also seen in Gen 11:1 and Matt 10:34. Jesus was talking of what the disciples are supposed to be as a group in the midst of the inhabitants of the earth.[290] It is good to reiterate at this point that in Matthew the "earth" (v 13) and the "World" (v 14) simply refer to the totality of mankind (v 16). This is much like the OT use of the term "Earth" (Gen 11:1; Matt 10:34; Luke 12:49). The Greek speaking community usually adopts the term "World" (Wis. 6:24; 10:1; 14:6; Mark 14:9; Matt 13:38; 18:7; 1 Cor. 1:27-28) to refer to the totality of mankind.[291] By Earth therefore Matthew was referring to human inhabitants of the earth.

4.8.3 The Question of Insipid Salt (Matt 5:13bc)

The next question is asked in verse 13b- *ean de to halas mōranthē en tini halisthēsetai?* "But if salt has lost its taste (become tainted), how shall its saltness be restored?" This is a conditional statement with prostaxis and apodosis. It is introduced by the particle *ean de.* It is used here with aorist subjunctive - *mōranthē* in the prostaxis and with the indicative future passive - *halisthēsetai* in the apodosis. The implication of the above hypothetical question is that the speaker envisages a situation where salt may lose its taste. The speaker is asking, 'should it happen, how shall its saltness or power of being salt restored?" Such a situation seems unimaginable, and would provide awkward situation should it happen. Salt is salt if it

[290] Davies and Allison 472.

[291] Eduard Schweizer The Good News According to Matthew (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975) 100.

has its distinctiveness and that distinctiveness is saltness. Hence, tainted salt is no salt at all but chaff.

The descriptive affirmation (Matt 5:13a) is followed by the hypothetical question: *ean de to halas mōranthē*. . .(v. 13b). Matthew and Luke have the same word *mōranthē/* or *mōrainein* which literally means 'becomes foolish' (Sir 23:14; Rom 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:20) whereas Mark has *analon genētai* which literally means 'becomes saltless' or 'desalted.' The explanation for this difference is probably to be found in the Hebrew or Aramaic root word *tāpēl* which means 'worthless', 'whitewash', 'tasteless', 'unseasoned' 'to be foolish' (Job 1:22; 24:12; Jer. 23:13) or 'to be *analos* (Job 6:6).[292] It seems that it was that word that they were trying to capture its translation. So we appear to have translation variant. The supposition is supported by the possibility of a word-play in Aramaic: If salt has lost its *tāpēl* (taste) how shall it be *tābblunnēh* (seasoned)?[293] It is used here because disciples losing their value as disciple are equivalent to becoming foolish. It would in effect be to lose their identity. This justifies the Igbo adage which says, "*Oburu na agwo emeghi ihe ojiri buru agwo, umuaka ewere ya mere ihe nkedo akwa,"* (If snake does not behave like a cobra children would not mind to use it as belt.) Hence, "Uselessness invites disaster. If a Christian is not fulfilling his purpose as a Christian, then he is on the way to disaster."[294]

Reflecting on the enormity of the responsibility given to the disciples as the "Salt of the earth" (v.13) Chrysostom says,

[292] See the section under Semantics.
[293]Davies and Allison 474.
[294] Barclay, 121.

> Others who have lost their savour can recover it through your ministry; but if you fall into that evil condition, you draw others into ruin with you. So the greater the task entrusted to you, the greater effort you need. That is why Christ says: if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.[295]

The text envisages a situation where salt would depreciate in value and not absence of it. The question will be, is it possible that salt could run the risk of losing its value, if so how? Or is it possible for salt to depreciate in value?

The situation of salt becoming insipid implies that the derailed disciples, apostate disciples, or disciples that are not living according to their vocation are valueless to the society. If the writer says that there is no conceivable manner in which the desalted salt can be re-salted, it is not an over statement. The earth is in need of disciples, it needs attention of the disciples, if then the disciples are of poor quality or, of low grade, then the earth, the abode of humans itself will suffer the loss. The implication of all these is that if the quality of the disciples or Christians on earth including Nigeria, or if they are merely pretending to be what they are not, then, the earth including Nigeria as the case maybe will suffer greatly. Followers of Christ were originally known as disciples everywhere but it was because they were living a life contrary to that of their fellow Jews and manifesting a life very similar to that of Christ, that they were therefore christened 'Christians' in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Scholars like Jordan argue that disciples

[295]Chrysostom On Matthew's Gospel (Homily 15, 6.7).

as salt of the earth has lost its flavour in the past, it is not really something new. Hence Jordan who understands what Jesus meant by asking the rhetorical question says,

> The history of the Christian church is full of illustrations of this truth. One of the more recent ones is the way the church was booted out of Russia after the revolution. The priesthood was utterly corrupt, and the church sought to maintain the status quo by siding with the Czarist regime against the exploited masses. Church officials clearly sold the Christian birthright for a mess of pottage. The salt lost its strength, and when the revolution came, the salt was promptly cast out. Or to use another graphic scriptural illustration of this truth "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth" (Rev 3:15-16).[296]

Sexual scandals that were recently exposed among the hierarchy of clergy in the United State of America and indeed other parts of the world are eloquent enough to expose the effect of a desalted salt in a particular environment and by extension all over the world. Such sexual abuse and scandal by Roman Catholic clergy led to so many lawsuits, and criminal prosecutions of all sorts. The ugly trend started in 1985 to the extent that a priest pleaded guilty to 11 counts of molestation of boys.[297] This scandal unearthed so many others and it is still

[296] Jordan, 41.

[297] "Pedophile ex-priest Gilbert Gauthe out of Texax Jail" www.truthfinder.com/Records Retrieved 29th December, 2018.

rocking American Catholic Church family even till today. It gives credence to the opinion of Jordan as already quoted.

This verse (13b) is followed by the answer immediately: *eis ouden ischuei* . . . *katapateisthai* . . . (v.13c). This has no correspondence in Mark 9:50. Luke reads, 'it is not fit neither for the land (*eis gēn*) nor for the dunghill; men throw it away (*ezō ballousin*). He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Luke 14:34-35). Jesus did not waste any time in telling his disciples how saltless salt could be handled and thereby giving them warning of what awaits them if they happen to derail from their God given vocation.

This idea of throwing the saltless salt away has a connotation of the last judgment which is replete in some other parts of the Gospel: 8:12; 22:13; 25:30. In those passages the Matthean Jesus makes reference to what will happen on the last day. When the salt that is no longer valuable is thrown away it receives suffering all the more for it will be continuously receiving pain in form of disdain under the feet of mankind. Just as it will be the case of the sons of the kingdom should they not make the kingdom at the last day, they will be thrown to a place of weeping and gnashing of the teeth (Matt 8:12).
The word employed here to portray the fate of the valueless salt is *katapateisthai*. This word appears about four times in the whole Bible, three places in the synoptic and once in the Letter to the Hebrews (Matt 5:13c; 7:6; Luke 12:1; Heb 10:29). In each case the emphasis is in the treatment of whatever that is trampled or trodden on the ground with disdain. It is like Matthean Jesus says, "Just as the human spit is rejected and forgotten by all, a saltless salt is also rejected and forgotten." In the same way disciples that are not living according to their vocation (i.e. not living like salt in the midst of others) are treated as such. This is evidently seen in a clergy or a

Christian who is no longer living according to his or her own vocation.

The question is: who are *tōn anthrōpōn* of verse 13c, *kaiousin* (they =3rd person plural); pasin tois en tē oikia (all in the house) of verse 15 and tōn anthrōpōn of verse 16a? There is every indication that they are referring to the Jews and Gentiles who are outside the fold, that is, those who are not yet converted but are in the world. The implication is that the saltness and lightness is for non-Christians to be converted and glorify God who is in heaven. It is still a fact that followers of Christ did not call themselves "Christians" but the attribute came to them from non followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). This idea tallies with the universal mandate of Christ, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples . . ." (Matt 28:19). This is because a light is no light to light, simply put, light cannot enlighten light, just as salt cannot salt a salt.[298]
In the context Matthew was referring to salt that is not valuable not only from the point of view of losing its taste but also from the point of view of not being in use. That means a salt that is still in the salt container is not yet useful, until it is placed in close contact with food or material it is expected to act on. Disciples that live away from the society and have nothing to do with the society are not the useful disciples Jesus meant in this context. That means Jesus rejects unconcerned disciples or unaffected disciples. This reminds one of an Igbo Christian hymn that says, "*Anyi bu ndi n'eso dinwenu, anyi bu ndi agha chukwu anyi ga egosi uwa chukwu anyi ga enwe mmeri"* (We are the followers of Christ, we are the soldiers of God, we shall show God to the world, we shall remain victorious.) There is no way the disciples as salt of the earth can teach the world the tenets of Christ without being in constant contact with the

[298] Davies and Allison 478.

society. This approach of Jesus justifies the Igbo adage which says, "*Onye no mmadu nso n'aka a nu isi eze ya*" (it is the one who is very close to a person that perceives the person's mouth odour clearer than one who is far away.) One therefore who is not close enough to a person will not be able to understand the context of the person so as to assist. Put differently, you can never influence one you have no contact with or in communication with.

4.8.4 The Metaphor of Light (Matt 5:14a)

This section brings us into the second part of our text. It starts with the metaphorical statement about the disciples which is in the form of a "Descriptive Affirmation": *Humeis este to phōs tou kosmou* (you are the light of the world [v.14a]. The background of the above verse is likely to be Isa 2:2-5. The light image is part of the invitation to Israel. In Isa 42:6; 49:6 Israelite's vocation is revealed as a "light to the nations." It is also the same theme Paul picked up as he addressed the Jewish Christians in Rome (Rom 2:12-24). The function of the disciples as light is to be detached from the world, and yet their very existence is such that they cannot but exercise an influence on that world (Phil 2:15-16). "The light of the world" is a traditional phrase in both OT and NT (Isa 49:6; John 8:12).

The Matthean Jesus is still addressing his disciples or followers in this verse. This time around he addresses them using the metaphor of light. The Greek word he used is: *phōs,* **'**light'. The light mentioned presupposes certain conditions which include darkness. Darkness in biblical tradition is mainly the reign of evil manifested in corruption and disorderliness (Gen 1:1-3). Hence, "Where there is light people can find their way and everything is clear; where there is darkness they stumble and are lost; the imagery is strongly developed especially in the

Fourth Gospel, where it is Jesus himself who is the light of the world (John 8:12). Here the light which Jesus brings is also provided by his disciples, who will soon be commissioned to share in his ministry of proclamation and deliverance."[299]

In Chapter One under the definition of terms above, we exposed how light was used in the NT biblical tradition in different occasions to express a situation; light was used generally, that is, light as light or that which radiates and provides visibility: Matt 17:2; Luke 8:16; John 11:10; Acts 12:7; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14; Rev 18:23. Secondly light is used in biblical tradition as that which gives light or light provider like lamp, torch, candle, etc: Matt 6:23; Luke 11:35; John 11:9; Acts 16:29; James 1:17. Fire is not completely different from light provider but part and parcel of that, but fire apart from providing light also provides heat: Mark 14:54; Luke 22:56. Thirdly, light is taken in NT biblical tradition as the element and sphere of the Divine: John 1:4, 7-9; 9:5; 12:35f, 46; 1 Tim 6:16; 1 John 1:5, 7b. Finally, light was used in the biblical tradition figuratively or metaphorically: Matt 4:16; 5:14; Luke 16:8; John 8:12; Acts 13:47; 26:18; Rom 2:19; 13:12; Eph 5:13; Col 1:12; 1 John 2:8-10.

This descriptive affirmation 'You are the light of the world' would never have been a surprise to the Jewish hearers of Jesus because they are used to that and also because they are used to associating light with Torah, Temple, Jerusalem, Israel, or even some group within Israel (Isa 60:1-3; Bar 4:2). David is the lamp of Israel (2 Sam 21:17), and his descendants are called lights in 1 Kgs 11:36; Psalm 132:17; Luke 2:32. The surprise may come to the disciples only from the point of view that they were being referred to as light as followers of Jesus. Matthew

[299]France, 175.

added the emphatic pronoun *humeis este*[300] before each of the sayings in verses 13 and 14, this is followed by the frequent use of "Your" in the following verse: Your light, your good deeds, your father in heaven (v.16). These personal pronouns "you," and "your," bring out the personal and positive quality of discipleship and what Jesus really expects from his followers. Some commentators take *humeis este* in verses 13 and 14 as referring to the apostles[301] while majority of scholars see it as referring to the disciples. Cardinal Peter Turkson refers to the metaphors of salt and light as referring to the disciples which stands for the church today. He sees the pronoun "You" as standing for the church, hence having the African continent in mind says, "The Church must preserve the continent and its people from the putrefying effects of hatred, violence, injustice and ethnocentrism. The Church must purify and heal minds and hearts of corrupt and evil ways and administer her life-giving Gospel message to keep the continent and its people alive, preserving them in the path of virtue and Gospel values, such as reconciliation, justice and peace."[302]

In Matt 5:14a Jesus does not say that his disciples are light in the general terms, or sources of light, or they are the abode of the divine but they are light figuratively. That means, they are light already produced from the source, a light that had already been lighted from a source, so as to illumine their environment. Jesus did not say that his disciples are the lamp, torch, candle,

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[300] Davies and Allison 472.

[301] George Arthur Butrick (ed.) The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press Nashville, 1951) 289.

[302] Cardinal Peter Turkson "Call to Work for Justice and Peace" Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa http://www.catholicnews-tt.net/joomla. Retrieved on 26/4/2010.

sun, or moon but they are "readymade" light. The implication of this is that, the disciples are not the source of the light they are, just as a luminous object is not the owner of the light it radiates but the light it absorbed from the main source of light namely the sun. God himself through Jesus is the source of the light that has illumined them and with this they can illuminate others. In the OT and NT traditions, the progression is from God (Psalm 4:6; 18:28; 26:1; 31:16; Job 29:2-3; 2 Cor. 4:6), through Jesus (John 8:12), to the disciples (Matt 4:16; 5:14a) and finally to those who would be affected by their teachings (Matt 28:20).

In the OT, apart from Moses, the following people: Abraham, Deborah, Joshua, Elijah, Judith, etc, were light to the people of Israel. The light in Moses blossomed more when he came down from Mount Sinai to the extent that Aaron, leaders of the people and indeed the whole people of Israel were afraid to come near him until he beckoned on them to come (Exod 34: 29-35). By that Moses proved to be a follower of God both in spirit and form. If Moses had remained without demystifying himself he would not have been of any benefit to the people of Israel as a whole. That means if he had remained on that mountain or isolated himself because of his new status he would not have been of any benefit to them (Exod 32:1). He mingled with them and thus assisted them to know the will of God. Again the light that Moses radiates has its source from the abode of God hence justifying the age long belief that light is the abode of divine and that God dwells in an unapproachable light. This also emphasizes that Moses has no light but God is the source of the light he had, hence "The Lord is my light . . ." (Psa 26:1). Just as God enlightened Moses, Moses became a light to the Israelites (Exod 34:29-35) and Israel would be a light to the nations (Isa 49:6; 51:4) and in this verse, the disciples of Jesus are commissioned to be the light of

the whole world. It is good to note that the people of Israel as light is a common metaphor in both the OT and NT traditions: Isa 42:6; 49:6; Dan 12:3; Matt 4:16; 5:14a; Acts 13:47; Rom 2:19; Eph 5:8-9; Phil 2:15. So it is not really something new as we have said already.

Light is a very important metaphor in biblical tradition. God is light (1 John 1:5); Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). God is also described as light in eschatological contexts (Isa 60:19-20). God has come in Christ to bring light into the darkness (John 1:4-5, 9; 12:46). This is what Matthew emphasizes in his quotation of Isaiah (Isa 9:2) in Matt 4:16 where he states: "the people sitting in darkness have seen a great light". In Paul the metaphor is extended to Christians, where Christians are described as 'children of light' (Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5). In Isa 42:6, Israel's mission is to be a "light to the Gentiles." Qumran Covenanters also referred to themselves as 'sons of light.' "Light is thus associated with God, his Messiah, his people, the Law, the Temple, Jerusalem, and the accomplishment and experience of salvation . . . Paul writes about 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ' (2 Cor 4:4). Of Christians he writes that in this fallen world they 'shine as lights' (Phil 2:15). For Matthew, the metaphor of light is applied specifically to God's new people represented by the disciples."[303]

4.8.5. City on the Hill Top and Lamp on the Lampstand (Matt 5:14b-16)

To make clearer the meaning of the metaphor of light, Matthean Jesus went on to say: *polis keimene epanō orous* . . . "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt 5:14b). The city that is being referred to here can be any city because there is no

[303] Hagner, 100.

definite article following the city talked about by Matthean Jesus in the above verse. This is also the case with the lamp mentioned in 5:15. It has no definite article too. So any city or lamp could fit in their stead.[304] This implies that it can be any city or lamp respectively. The phrase tells us that any city built on top of a hill will always remain visible; and it will be a contradiction to imagine a city on a hill to appear hidden. It expresses the idea that whatever is set up on high must always be visible to all. Anything on a hill top is beyond what is at the mercy of ordinary light but what could be seen despite all odds since nothing would obstruct it from the source of light and from giving out the light it had absorbed.

A City is known to be made up of very many buildings established together. A house therefore does not make a city just as a tree does not make a forest. Jesus by this is not referring to an individual but to a particular-gathered-group. So when different houses are established on a mountain top and each of the houses or even the majority of the houses are lighted then the city will be radiating in the night from every angle. The implication of this is that Jesus was painting a picture of unity where if every disciple no matter where he or she is located and is shinning then every place will be flooded with light. But if the individual lights are not on, then the idea of a city will be defeated.

It is not a question of individualism but communalism. It means, though, the disciples are made up of different individuals, the type of signal coming from them must necessarily be the same. Put differently, it is unity in diversity. It is a command to blossom wherever one is planted. So this is a symbol not of conspicuous individual but of the collective

[304] Davies and Allison 475.

impact of a whole community. "It is the collective light of a whole community which draws the attention of the watching world."[305] Jordan maintains that "A lone Christian is not a city set upon a hill, nor will his single candle light the world. You need your brothers and they need you. Your gifts or your good will won't suffice. You must give yourself and take your stand with Christ's people, thereby increasing the candle power of the light of the world." [306]

One may also wonder whether it was a city that Matthew meant actually in 5:14b, it would have been most appropriate to say, "A light placed on a hill top cannot be hidden," just like the lamp of Matt 5:15. If the lamp is on its stand it will be giving light to all in the house but if hidden it will not be giving light or its aim is defeated. A lighted lamp on a stand could not be hidden but unilluminated city on a hill top could be hidden at night. We submit that the text used "city on a hill top" to portray the communal nature of what is demanded from the disciples.

Furthermore, in Matt 5:13-16 is further explanation of the metaphor of light with image of a Lamp on the lampstand (5:15-16). This has three parts namely, (1) Negative generalization: *oude kaiousin luchnon* . . . (v. 15a); (2) Positive generalization which answers the negative generalization question: *all epi tēn luchnian* (v. 15b); (3) There is the application which is in the form of command or imperative: *lampsatō to phōs humōn)* (v. 16). Let us then look at them one after the other.

[305] France, 171.
[306] Jordan, 43-4.

Negative generalization: oude kaiousin luchnon . . . (nor do they light a lamp . . .) v. 15a. This is a negative question whose answer is obvious. This is because people rarely light a lamp only to cover it up again for that would be tantamount to extinguishing the lamp. To put a lamp on means to dispel darkness; to light a lamp and put it under a bushel has a lot to say about the one who lights the lamp. The person maybe either hiding something or that the person has a sort of psychological problem or again he might be struggling for safety. Barclay narrates how a lamp could be lighted and put under a bushel. The houses in Palestine were very dark with only one little circular window perhaps not more than eighteen inches across. The lamp was like a saucer-boat filled with oil with the wick floating in it. It was not so easy to rekindle a lamp in the days before matches existed. Normally the lamp stood on the lamp-stand which would be no more than a roughly shaped branch of wood. But when people went out for safety's sake, they took the lamp from its stand, and put it under an earthen bushel measure, so that it might burn without risk until they came back.[307]

T. France corroborates this fact when he says a domestic lamp was a shallow bowl of oil with a wick. It would normally be stationary, placed on a fixed lamp-stand. *Tēn luchnian* (the lamp-stand) could either be made of pottery or metal product (Exod 25:31-40). The "bowl" is literally a grain measure holding about nine litres, probably made of earthenware or basketwork. While it may be true that a lamp placed under such a receptacle would soon go out for lack of oxygen, the point seems to be rather the absurdity of hiding a lamp when its whole *raison d'être* is to be visible. This can also be seen in Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16, Gospel of Thomas 33, and Luke

[307] Barclay, 123.

11:33.[308] Any Light therefore, placed under a bowl is out of use.

The most important thing is that even at that point of putting it down and covering it with earthen vessel, the lamp is no longer in use but the light can still be noticed that it is there. This is because if lamp is lit and covered to the extent that no one sees its light, then that light is liable to go off for lack of oxygen. But as long as the lamp is in use it must be left on its stand.
In Matt 5:15 lamp (*luchnos*) is used literally just as it is used in the following passages: Mark 4:21; Luke 11:33, 36; 15:8; John 5:35; Rev 18:23; 22:5; whereas in Matt 6:22 and Rev 21:23 lamp was used figuratively. So in Matt 5:15, Jesus was not speaking figuratively of lamp but literally. The purpose of lamp is to give light and thus it is placed upon a stand so that all in the house could see with its help.[309] Thus "all those who are in the house" (*pasin tois en tē oikia*) should not be understood in a restricted sense but parallel in meaning to Matt 5:16- "the people" (*tōn anthrōpōn*) who will see your good deeds and give glory to your father who is in heaven (*dozasōsin ton patera humōn ton en tois ouranois).* In verse 15 people who are in the room will see with the lamp and know that there is a lamp there; whereas in v16 people will see your good deeds and thus glorify your father who is in heaven. When a light is lit, it was placed upon or hung from a stand so as to provide maximum benefit from the light.[310] This should also be the intention of Jesus by giving the imperative of v16. The people being referred to here are the unbelievers or people in the world. They are those who may see your good works and

[308] France, 178.
[309] Davies and Allison 476.
[310] Hagner, 100.

give glory to your Father who is in heaven. House metaphorically stands for the world.

Matt. 5: 15a parales Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33. But Matt. 5:15b- *Kai lampei pasin tois en tē oikia*_ (and lightens all who are in the house) has no equivalent in Mark. Luke 11:33 has *hina hoi eisporeuomenoi to pheggos blepōsin* (that the ones entering the light may see. There is a difference between what we have in Matt 5:15b and Luke 11:33. Matt talks only of the bowl (v 15a), Mark talks of bowl or bed (Mark 4:21), whereas Luke talks of jar or bed (Luke 8:16). Again when Luke talks of that idea in 11:33 he talks of celler (a hiding place) and a bowl, hence his version in 11:33 is closer to Mark's version than to his first use of the saying in Luke 8:16.[311] Matt 15b says that the light shines for all in the house whereas Luke 11:33 talks of those who are entering the place where the lamp is situated were the people who would see the light. This is just saying the same thing in different ways for if the light in a room is not shining those who are entering will not see it, that is, if it is covered, and not on the lamp-stand, those who are coming in will not notice the shining of the light. In the same way, if the light is covered, those in the house will not see hence there will be no shining of the light. *Eisporeuomenoi* (those coming in- Luke 8:16) is substantive plural participle. It is noticed in Luke 11:33; Acts 3:2; 28:30.

The difficulty of most exegetes is why the idea of hiddenness in the use of lamp. Ordinarily no one thinks of lighting a lamp and hiding it at the same time. W. Davies suggests that Jesus is contrasting his disciples with the Qumran sect, who called themselves 'the sons of light' but 'hid their light under a bushel at Qumran and in enclosed communities. T. France

[311]Schweizer 100.

commenting on the above says it would be valid argument, though it is questionable how far either Jesus' hearers or Matthew's readers would be familiar with the special ethos of the Qumran Sect or with their terminology.[312]

Houtōs (in this manner, thus, so) of verse 16 connects verses 14 and 15 together: a city set on a hill (v 14b); like a lamp on a lamp-stand (v 15); again to *phōs* is taken from v 14 and *lampei* (shines) is from v 15. The emphasis is that the light must shine for all men to see so as to give glory to God. *Houtōs* is used with the same meaning in verse 16 just as it means in the following passages: Matt 5:19; 12:40; Mark 7:18; 10:43; 14:59; Luke 11:30; 24:24; John 3:8; 11:48; 21:1; Acts 8:32; Rom 1:15; 12:5; Gal 3:3; Rev 16:18. The adverb *Houtōs* emphasizes the unity of the text of Matt 5:13-16.

Most interestingly, there is the application which is in the form of command or imperative: *lampsatō to phōs humōn* (let your light shine) v. 16. It is the only hortatory line in 5:13-16. It brings out clearly the meaning of verses 14 and 15 as well as that of verse 13. The light imagery which started in verse 14 is developed in the sayings of Jesus in 5:15-16 in which Jesus' followers are challenged to active engagement in their "good work." The goal of these works is that other people might come to praise God (v 16).[313] In verse 16 therefore,

> The metaphor of v 15 is now explained more prosaically, with the 'light' shed by disciples interpreted as the good that they do. The phrase 'good deeds' conveys the qualities set out in the beatitudes and especially the 'righteousness' of life which is to be characteristic of disciples (Vv

[312] France 176-177.
[313] Harrington 80.

> 6, 10, 20); the phrase and the concept are echoed in 1 Peter 2:11-12. It is only as this distinctive lifestyle is visible to others that it can have its desired effect.[314]

The last phrase of verse 16 is *kai dozasōsin ton patera humōn ton en tois ouranois* this brings out what every disciple aim at on his day to day life in the world. He is not doing anything to attract attention unto himself but to his father who is in heaven. Their own reward and satisfaction comes when their father who is in heaven must have been glorified. Doing one's good works: *Houtōs lampsatō to phōs humōn emprosthen tōn anthrōpōn* (v. 16a) "Let your light shine before people," and the reason for letting your light shine before people is for them to see your good works and thus glorify your father who is in heaven. "Heavenly Father" is an expression that is prominent in Matthew, but seen only once in Mark and Luke. It has its root from Judaism (Wis. 2:16; 14:3; Ecc. 23:1, 4). This phrase runs throughout the Sermon as the constant point of reference (5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 14-15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21).

This verse (16a) seems to be in tension with the warning of Matthean Jesus in Matt 6:1 which warns that one should not do his good deeds before people *(elēmosunēn humōn mē poiein emprosthen tōn anthrōpōn)*. A closer look at 6:1 reveals that what Matthean Jesus was against was almsgiving or prayer done deliberately for self-glorification instead of the glorification of God. This is clearly explained in 6:2-6 and 16-18. Allowing one's light to shine has the motive of allowing people around to see the good deeds so as to praise the Father in heaven.[315] Jesus did not ask his disciples to let their light

[314] France, 177.
[315] Hagner, 101.

shine in a showy manner for that will amount to hypocrisy which he denounced in 6:1 as we stated above. "Nevertheless, light is destined to shine; it cannot be hidden. That means, Salt and Light are not salt and light by what they do but by what they are. Like a city on a mountaintop, it will always be visible (Matt 5:14-16). In other words, disciples, who are the light, cannot pass unnoticed. Through their actions, then, they shine on people as light which makes everything inhuman in them perfectly visible and intelligible. They do this through their "good works . . . (Matt 25:35-36)".[316] Chrysostom referring to the phrase "a city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden" (v.14) says, "By these words he urges them to a well-ordered way of life, teaching them to be ready for action, since they live with all eyes upon them, constants in the centre of a stadium that is the world."[317] This captures the idea the writer has in mind as regards the above metaphors. This brings out the Igbo adage which says, "*Onye a na ekiri ekiri ekwesigh ite unyi n'iru"* (he who is being admired should not smear himself with charcoal). Jordan boldly captures the above ideas thus,

> Since we can't escape shining, since we can't be hid, our testimony should be a credit to the Father. We must not live as cowardly, cringing weaklings. Whether persecution or praise be our lot is immaterial. The main thing is that men may clearly see in us the image of the Father who begot us, and that we may be the kind of sons and daughters in whom the Father is well pleased. The world has no way of seeing God except through the image of Christ which

[316] Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa, No 38.
[317] Chrysostom On Matthew's Gospel, (Hom 15, 6.7).

> is formed in the hearts of those who love and obey him.[318]

It is this idea that St John Chrysostom has in mind when he says, "The man who is gentle, moderate, merciful and just does not shut up his good works in himself, but is concerned that those fair springs should flow for the benefit of others. Again, he who is clean of heart, and a peace maker, who feels the urge for truth- such a man orders his life for the benefit of all."[319]
"Jesus' disciples are to live in the world so that the world will see their deeds and be moved to glorify God. Closet Christianity and self-directed service are excluded. Compare 25:14-30: talents must be turned into talents; to hide them away is to lose everything. Note that in being lights the disciples are imitating Jesus, who was a light to those sitting in darkness (4:15-16)".[320]
In Matt 5:13-16, verse 16 serves as the climax of the entire pericope. Since the disciples are the light of the world (v 15), they are now exhorted to let their light shine that is, they are to let the light accomplish its purpose. There are no known parallels to this imperative use of *lampein* "shine" in the OT or rabbinical literature though Isa 42:6 could be its background.[321]
The essence of allowing one's light to shine is to give *dozasōsin ton patera* "glory to the Father" (v 16). From all intent, God is referred to as *patera (paterē)* in v 16. It occurs about 45 times in Matthew and about nineteen times modified as we have it in v 16 by the words "in heavens," or "heavenly." It is only John that uses "Father" for God more than Matthew did. God is referred to as "Father" seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount; in seven instances the

[318] Jordan, 43.
[319] Chrysostom On Matthew's Gospel, (Hom 15, 6.7).
[320] Davies and Allison 478.
[321] Hagner, 100-1.

modifier, which occurs in the context, is not repeated.[322] In the following passages *paterē* refers to God as Parent of humanity Matt 6:4; Luke 6:36; John 8:41-42; 20:17c; Rom 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:2, 3b; Col 1:2; Tit 1:4. In the following passages *paterē* refers to God as Parent of Jesus Christ Matt 7:21; Mark 8:38; 14:36; Luke 2:49; John 4:21; 6:40; Rome 15:6; 2 Cor. 11:31; Eph 1:3; Rev 2:28. In the following passages often God is called simply (ho`) *patēr* (the) Father, (the) Parent Gal 1:1; Eph 1:17; 2:18; 3:14; Phil 2:11; 1 J 1:2; 2:1, 15.

We have discovered from above that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to the disciples of Jesus as sons of God. Others who were there were there for a purpose, mainly as a result of what they are gaining from Jesus (Matt 4:25-5:2; 7:28-29). The mandate Jesus was giving to his disciples in Matt 5:13-16 is for the world including the crowds that were there already. For the disciples to be true light and salt they are not supposed to distance themselves from the crowd or from the world. Jesus did not ask them to abhor any profession but that they are the light of the world and the salt of the earth means that they are expected to permeate all professions or vocations in the world. The implication is that if Christians were to see themselves in different professions and they are true to their vocation of being salt and light then there is no doubt that they will transform those professions. For instance, a Christian politician, police, lawyer, soldier, trader, teacher/formator, student, etc will make a difference. If the followers of Christ were not different from the Jews and Gentiles who are outside the church, there is no way they could have been recognized as "Christians" in Antioch (Acts 11:26). The disciples were called to have higher level of values hence they were told, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and

[322] Hagner, 101.

Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20). This righteousness that must exceed those of the Scribes and Pharisees must have its root on the interpretation of the Torah as offered by Jesus (Matt 5:21-47). Again this righteousness must be measured according to the standard of God himself (Matt 5:48). The implication of this is that there would never be a condition when a Christian would say he or she has done enough if God is his or her model.

Since we discovered in our exegesis that a house does not make a city but different houses combined together; it is then clear that every follower of Christ has to contribute his or her own light no matter where he or she is positioned. When one approaches a big city in the night what one sees is illumined environment that is done by houses that are with lights; though there maybe few houses that might be without light, but the presence of other buildings with light overshadows that and make them unnoticed. "Light is effective because of its contrast with the surrounding darkness. It is this visible distinctiveness which arouses the hostility of others and leads to the slander and persecution which the ninth beatitude celebrates."[323]

Salt in a salt-container remains enclosed and not in use. Its importance is not being utilized. In the same way light under a bushel is not in use unless placed on a lamp-stand so as to allow its light to radiate in the environment. Flight from the world therefore is not part of the qualities Christ advocates for his followers in this text and context. Jesus was aware of the smallness of his followers and largeness of the world or earth yet he calls them salt of the earth and the light of the world

[323]France 171-2.

because he knows that light and salt are contagious they can never be restricted in their permeation of any environment they are in. That means whatever they touched will also touch other things. In the same way whoever the disciples would affect would affect others and before you know it the whole world would be affected. The end of this crusade will be the glorification of God. It is verse 16 that clearly brings a new, one of the major vocations of Israelites which is "to be a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). The summary of this is that God commissioned his servant to be "a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6; 49:6). The world needs that light and it is through the disciples that Jesus intends it to be made visible. The world (v.14) and earth (v.13) refer to the world of people and earth of the people respectively just as verse 16 made it clearer. The world or earth stands for the people in the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHRISTIANITY OF NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS IN THE LIGHT OF MATT. 5:13-16: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

5.1. Matthew's Context vis-à-vis The Nigerian Christian Context:

There was a situation that existed before Christ that made the Sermon on the Mount imperative and subsequently made the teachings of the Sermon acceptable to the hearers (Matt 7:28). We want to establish here that a similar scenario plays itself out in Nigeria today. Before the advent of Christ, Palestinians were at the cross-road without knowing which direction to take and the inhabitants were really looking for a way forward. There was an expectation of a Messiah who would free them from all bondage. They were under Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, under Alexander the Great and his Macedonian armies; finally, they were conquered by the Romans in 63 BC. This is to the extent that either through the Herodian client kings or the collaborating Jewish priestly aristocracy, the Romans controlled affairs in Jewish society.[324] They appeared ready to do whatever so as to serve both God and their country. Jordan captures the situation thus:

> Their country was occupied by the tyrannical military government of Rome, so there was ever-present question of the right attitude

[324] Richard A. Horsley, Jesus and the Spiral of Violence, Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 3-32.

> toward these enemies. Race prejudice was so prevalent that a fellow hardly knew who his neighbour was. The staggering taxes, already about a third of one's pay-check, kept alive the problem of what one would eat or drink or wear. The middle class of people had almost disappeared; there were only the very rich and the very poor. Slavery was rampant. It was a dark hour indeed.[325]

The church as we know it today is supposed to be a home for the consolation of the disconsolate, and for the Jews in those days it was the Temple that took care of all that. But before the advent of Christ the Temple officers in Jerusalem were anything but helpful to the people in anyway.[326] Not only that the temple officers were not speaking out against the oppression of the poor but they were also extorting the people (Luke 18: 10-14b). The people struggled under double burden of taxation: tithes and other dues paid to the Temple and priests as well as tribute and other taxes to Rome.[327] George Shillington captures the situation thus: "The Temple taxed its devotees for the maintenance of the buildings and the support of the priests, while offering them little in the way of practical help in the struggles of their lives, especially their peasant-village lives in Galilee where Jesus lived, preached, healed, and exorcised demons."[328] So, Jesus saw the Jewish religious

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[325] Clarence Jordan, Sermon on the Mount (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1980) 10.

[326] Horsely, 11.

[327] J. Jeremiahs, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress, 19689) 105.

[328] V. George Shillington, "Engaging With the Parables" Jesus and His Parables, Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999) 9.

practices as something that had become impotent and the people were wearied. This is because people were not really receiving the consolation they needed from the Temple and the synagogue officials as a result of the wrong interpretation of the Torah and subsequently its wrong application coupled with the highhandedness of the foreign leadership they were subjected to.

According to the Land use act in Palestine, land belongs to God and Israelites are just tenants. The implication of that is that any portion of land that belongs to one must be his permanent inheritance, in such a way that even if one incurs debt that led to the disposing of the land, the land must be reverted to the original owner on the Jubilee year (Lev 25). But before and "in the time of Jesus the debt law had fallen into disuse; peasants had lost their plot that sustained life to elite city dwellers; the elite rich were permitted to retain their foreclosures of land without censure from the authorities; and landless peasants were forced into destitution on the land promised them by the Law."[329]

The situation was worrisome to the extent that it gave rise to so many sects in Palestine. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots, and the Qumran community were all products of and responses to the crisis into which Jewish society had been drawn during its subjection to dominant empires. If not from the passages of the Holy Scripture we cannot claim to have authentic information as regard these sects except the Qumran community from which we have the extensive Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeological remains that point to it.[330] They set out to proffer solutions to the situation according to their

[329] Shillington, 10.
[330] Horsely, 16.

various dispositions and inclinations even when they were part of the problem. Some saw the situation as unmanageable, the best way to handle it therefore was to apply sedatives that could help one to forget it and enjoy life as much as possible. The commoners who were in the majority in this group saw no need of trying to change the situation, since they could not do anything, it was what they had to live with; hence, they saw the situation as being beyond them. The Zealots took the law into their hands and were like saying, "we must win our national freedom." They took to guerrilla warfare/militancy so as to force Rome out of their country. Another group that needs to be mentioned is the Sadducees. They were the aristocratic priestly group that ran the Temple services together with the Levites. Their only problem was that they were very good at compromising as long as it worked to their personal advantage. They were the most comfortable and always in alliance with Roman authority. They were not speaking out for that may spell doom to their pockets. Their slogan seems to have been "if you can't beat them you join them." They were extorting the people as far as temple sacrifice and temple taxes are concerned. [331] Hence, Corruption in the First-Century Temple as well as in the Second Temple is not so much in doubt (1 Sam 2:12-17, 29; Matt 21:12-13; 24:45-51). To confirm the above, Craig Evans says, "Various groups such as some tannaitic and early amoraic rabbis; members of the zealot coalition, Qumran sectarians, and Josephus viewed various priests, High Priests, or priestly families as wealthy, corrupt,

[331] Craig A. Evans Jesus and His Contemporaries, Comparative Studies (Boston- Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2001) 320-344. E. P. Sanders, in his work "Jesus and Judaism" (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 61-76 denies any form of corruption in the First-Century Temple. I see his stand as lacking in evidence especially after a thorough study of Evans' work.

often greedy, and sometimes violent."[332] But for the Pharisees who were the learned legal experts or the educated class of teachers of the Law in charge of synagogue worships, they taught that life would work only one way, and that was in slavish obedience to God, for he was a strict, severe taskmaster who allows no deviation from the straight line of the law. So for the Pharisees, you have to slave yourself for God and God will fight for you.[333] Another important group or sect was the Essenes/Hasidim or members of the Qumran community. This was the ascetic group that withdraw itself from the day to day activities of religious and political life of the Jews because of what they construed as lives that were at variance with what God commanded in the Torah. Hence they saw themselves as the remnants that will be saved when the Messiah comes. They saw themselves as people who are on the right direction.[334] Jordan says it thus:

> In the midst of this wild clamour, the quiet One climbed Judea's hills and walked the plains of Galilee. He knew the people- their hopes and fears, their longings and frustrations, their confusion and hunger; he knew they were like sheep without a shepherd. And it was no secret that he had tremendous power over them. He had authority. They knew it, and he knew it.[335]

It seems to suggest that Jesus appeared when it was clear that people had lost proper direction in their relationship with God as well as their neighbours. The people were suffering so much that, improper interpretation of the Torah, confusion, bickering, wickedness, hatred, sectarianism, externalism and

[332] Evans, 342.
[333]Jordan, 10.
[334] Horsely, 18.
[335] Jordan, 11.

misplacement of values became the order of the day.[336] The essence of the Torah to the Jews through Moses was for the welfare of all Israelites; for them to live well and enjoy life in God as much as possible in the Land God gave to them; but this seems to have been neglected. It is this background that the author of the first gospel incorporated in his narration of Jesus event.

The above scenario is not much different from Nigerian scenario. In Nigeria there has been spiral of violence as a result of structural injustice as well as bribery and corruption in almost all levels. For instance, militancy has become a household name in Nigeria.[337] This is to the extent that in all parts of Nigeria there are both political and religious agitators like Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOB) and most recently, the IPOB[338] in the South East, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the South South, Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) as well as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)[339], Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC) in the West. In the North we do not really have a common agitating group

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[336] Horsely, 38.

[337] Okafor Ofiebor "Rivers of Blood, Militiamen are on the Rampage in Port Harcourt" Newswatch, Nigerian's Weekly Newsmagazine (August 30, 2004) 30. See also Okafor Ofiebor "Niger Delta, Peace At Last?" The News 33/15 (Oct. 19, 2009) 41-43.

[338] Christ Ajaero "Biafra the Making of Another Rebellion" Newswatch, Nigerian's Weekly Newsmagazine (August 30, 2004) 10-21; See also The News "The New Biafra" 23/9 (Sept. 6, 2004) 18-23; Tell, Nigerian's Independent Weekly 41 (Oct. 11, 2004) 16-22; The Week, The Weekly Treasure, "Government Hunts Biafra's Financiers" (July 19, 2004) 11-18.

[339] Newwatch, Nigerian's Weekly Newsmagazine (Oct. 18, 2004) 12-17; Gbenga Akinfenwa "Deadly Promise By MEND" The Week 25/15 (May 14, 2007) 22-25.

that stands for the entire North instead we have pockets of religious agitators like *Boko Haram* sect as well as Maitasina sects and numerous other militants.[340] *Arewa* Consultative Forum (ACF) is the only recognized group through which the Northerners express their demands but we have not really had cases of their carrying guns to drive home their demands. It is like the *Ohaneze* of Igbo. Exploitation of worshippers by church ministers and their cohorts is not equally new to Nigerians.[341] Bribery and corruption among the elites is equally a known fact.[342] Extrajudicial killings are rampant in Nigeria.[343] Things are generally very difficult in Nigeria to the extent that nothing goes for nothing. There are so many beggars on the Nigerian streets because of endemic corruption in the land.[344] Peasants as a result of the general hardship sell their pieces of land and other valuables so as to sustain themselves. Some people have also at the back of their brain that honesty can never guarantee success but failure. For one to succeed therefore one must be insincere. This is to the extent that some people are no longer pricked by their

[340]More than 50 religious crises were recorded in 30 years in the North and they left political, social, economic and psychological losses and pains in their tail. See: Demola Abimboye "The Damage Religious Crises Have Done to the North" Newswatch, Nigerian's Weekly Newsmagazine (Nov. 2, 2009) 10-21. See also "Boko Haram: Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Threatents to Sue Federal Government (FG), Others" Sunday Champion 23/016 (April 18, 2010) 30.

[341] Bamidele Johnson "Swindling Church Members" The News 32/23 (June 15, 2009) 12-21.

[342]Shola Oshunkeye, "How Wabara Crushed Himself" Tell, Nigerian's Independent Weekly 14 (April 4, 2005) 24-38. See also Yoshau A. Shuaib "Corruption and the Rest of Us" Daily Champion 19/35 (Feb. 16, 2007) 11.

[343] Kayode Fasua "The Enemies Next Door" Tell, Nigerian's Independent Weekly 28 (July 10, 2006) 18-22.

[344]Joy Olekanma "When Beggars Go Professional" Sunday Champion 23/016 (April 18, 2010) 31.

conscience when they indulge in immoral or irreligious activities.

The fundamental difference between Palestine and Nigeria is that Palestine was under the leadership of foreign power, whereas Nigeria is ruled by Nigerians themselves with heavy influence of the so called cabals.[345] Palestine at that time was under military government[346] and Nigeria is under the so called democratic government. In 2007, that is, at Nigerian's 47th Birthday, Vanguard News Paper comments that after independent 47 years ago, "the rosy future, the bridling optimism, freedom promised and the sworn brotherhood, collapsed within six years. Blames, aspersions, two and half years of civil war, state creation and the oil boom all devastated the young nation in various forms."[347] Out of those 47 years of the so called independence, Nigerians were under military regime for 28 years. Hence, judging from the way things were in Palestine as Richard Horsely tried to portray in his book[348] and the way it is in Nigeria today[349], we can rightly say that they have the same system of government. In theory they have different forms of government but in practice they have the same.

[345] Oluwatobi Bolashodun, 6 Powerful Cabals that have Hijacked Buhari's Government. (www.legit.ng.) Retrieved 03/01/2019.

[346]Horsely 3-32.

[347]Vanguard Comment, "Re-building Nigeria at 47" Vanguard 23/60423 (Monday, Oct. 1, 2007) 1-18.

[348] Richard A. Horsley Jesus and the Spiral of Violence, Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993)

[349]See Chapter One where we presented the summary situation of Nigeria in which Christians must live and work.

5.2. Understanding Matt 5:13-16 within the Nigerian Christian Context

We expose here how 'Salt and Light' as seen in Matthew's Gospel are interpreted within the Nigerian theological context. It is not hard as such to understand Matt 5:13-16 within the Nigerian Christian context; this is because the two metaphors (salt and light) employed by Jesus are not foreign to Christians in particular and Nigerians in general. They know what salt and light mean and what it means to use salt and light as well as what it means to call somebody/group salt or light. Nigerians as a whole and Christians in particular make use of the above metaphors in their day to day expressions. This means, if Nigerians were to be part of the original audience of Jesus, they would have fully understood what Jesus meant even without questioning him. And that is why one could even say today that Christians in Nigeria know fully the interpretation and meaning of Matt 5:13-16. The only problem a Christian in Nigeria has is the will to behave as the demands of salt and light as a result of political and economic, social and economic situation of Nigeria. This fact is made more explicit in our chapter three above.

To explain further, it is a fact that an age grade in Amesi town (a town in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State) goes by the name, *Gosiife Age Grade* (Show the Light). Anambra state has her sobriquet as "The Light of the Nation." This implies that the state takes the lead in almost everything that is positive, irrespective of what is happening in it today.[350]

[350] For instance, so many prominent names that have made Nigeria part of what it is today came from Anambra state like, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (the first president of Nigeria), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu (the one whose name means a lot both in Igbo land and Nigeria as a whole), Emeka Anyaoku (Former Scribe of the United Nations), Dora Akunyili (the former NAFDAC director general that made Nigeria popular in the act of fighting

Not only age grades or states, even individuals in Nigeria have been addressed as light based on certain things. Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom state is popularly known when he was the PDP Governor of Akwa Ibom State, as the *Utuenikang* "Lamp of the Akwa Ibom State."[351] What is not clear to the author is whether he still answers that name till today. Akwa Ibom people also have such names as *Obong Unwana* which literally means "King/Lord that gives light." Ogoni people of South South have such name as *Eedee* which means "the light." This is given especially when the family has been groaning and praying for the gift of a child and suddenly one is born. Some prominent persons of Igbo land are

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against adulterated drugs as well as the first minister to speak up against falsehood as it affects the state of the health of the then President, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and subsequently power was transferred to Goodluck Jonathan), Mr. Peter Obi (the first governor to handover more than N78 billion naira to his successor), Professor Humphrey Nwosu (the courageous electoral umpire that conducted the freest election in the history of Nigeria under President Bangida), Chief Alex Ekwueme (the first vice president from Igbo extraction), Professor Chukwuma Soludo (the former Central Bank Governor who first started the banking reform and also the use of polymer in the production of naira notes), Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi (the first Nigerian Saint in the making), Francis Cardinal Arinze (the former Nigerian highest office holder in the Vatican City, Rome), in the field of literature such names as Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Ekwensi, Chimamanda, are prominent. The above list is inexhaustible and they justify her sobriquet. This state has played host to the Catholic Supreme Pontiff twice consecutively. Elections in Anambra state has been issue based. The successful gubernatorial election of Feb. 6th 2010 which came as a surprise to all states of the federation and keeps the state ahead of all other states of the federation who are yet to reach her level. This is in a bid to reject the suppression of her lightness.

[351] He merited this name because it was alleged that there has never been any governor before him who had ever touched the life of Akwa Ibom people as he has done within three years of his administration as the governor of that state. He answers this name to the admiration of both friends and enemies.

addressed as *"Onwanetiriora"* (the moon that shines for everybody.) This name is normally given to people who are generous with their wealth. Also among the Igbo of Nigeria, the name "*Akaekpuchionwa"* (literally means, the hand cannot cover the moon) signifies that goodness can never be over looked.
In the same vein, among the Ikulu people of Southern part of Kaduna, we have such names as *Useah* which signifies "one who radiates light." Closely related to this is *Begyepar* which means, "the one who brings light." These names are highly treasured among the Ikulu people of Southern Kaduna because they believe that light generally comes from God. Among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, we have such names as *Omotanna* which means, "Child that brings light." Closely related to that is another name, *Inaale* which literally means "Evening light;" it is a metaphor that means- "The child is the light in my darkness."

On the other hand, Ebonyi state has her sobriquet as the "Salt of the Nation." Ebonyi state is an agricultural state. It feeds so many mouths in Nigeria. In the same vein, a parish in building in the diocese of Port Harcourt, St. Joseph Catholic Church Igbo-Etche all her members address one another with such words as: "You are the salt of the Earth" and the respondent(s) will answer, "You are the light of the World." It is interesting to note that most often when a Yoruba or Igbo person says that something is sweet, the qualification is always "like salt." For instance, an Igbo will say, "*O na-ato nnu nnu"* (it tastes like salt). When a Yoruba says, *aduniyo,* he refers to "something that has the sweetness of the salt." Yoruba person is given such names as *Omoniyo* or *Omodun* meaning "the child is sweet or has the sweetness of the salt."

All these signify that there seem to be no difficulty at all in the understanding of Matt 5:13-16 among Christians in Nigeria. They know fully what it implies but the only problem is to accept to live it out in the face of difficulties that characterize the Nigerian nation. As our chapter three made us to understand, it is easy to recognize those who are light and salt but it is difficult to live so that one would be regarded as such by others. A Christian is one, who, through the knowledge and teaching of Christ excels in self-discipline and righteousness, and in firmness of purpose.[352] This is not foreign to Nigerians, hence Kenneth Amasiatu says, "A Christian should be a morally transparent person . . . By this we mean: as he is outside so shall he be inside. He should not be crafty in his ways. He should be simply sincere and honest; shunning all insincerity and dishonesty. He should not play a double standard."[353] Christians in Nigeria know what it means to be salt and light.

In the various writings of Nigerian theologians the way they expressed the idea of light and salt point towards the same direction, that is, the meaning of Matt 5:13-16 is not elusive to them. For instance, Okure says, "The victory of the light over darkness recalls Paul's injunction, 'do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' (Rom 12:21). Believers are to serve as light in the world, not to be overcome by the darkness of sin and evil. In this way they too share in the victory of the

[352] Andrew Louth (ed) Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine (London: Pengiun Books, 1989) 15.

[353] Kenneth N.C. Amasiatu Practical Christianity . . . . The Challenge of Our Time (Orlu: Chimavin Productions Nig. Ltd, 2004) 6.

Word/Light over the darkness (cf. Matt 5:14-16)"[354] Munachi E. Ezeogu in his reflections on Matt 5:13-16 says,

> Being salt and light of the world means being different from the world. If believers have nothing that distinguishes them from unbelievers, then they are like salt that has lost its saltiness and therefore cannot make a difference. And what distinguishes us from non-believers should be not so much what we claim to be or the badges and pins we wear but the life we live.[355]

Anthony Umoren in his exegetical analysis of Matt 5-7 with emphasis on 5:11-16 says, "Arguing from common human experiences, Jesus tries to persuade the blessed ones to keep doing good works and not to be complacent by losing their salt taste, or by hiding their light under a bushel."[356]

Following the same line of thought, Justin Ukpong reflecting on the idea that Christians are called the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13) and the light of the world (Matt 5:14) says, "By their good works they worship God and cause other people to worship God (Matt 5:13-16). These good works described in Matt 5:1-12 include poverty, the practice of justice and acceptance of persecution for Jesus' sake etc. It is by these

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[354]Teresa Okure "John" The International Bible Commentary: An Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2001) 1534.

[355] Ezeogu Munachi Ezeogu "Homily for 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time- On the Gospel", Sunday Homilies For Year A.

[356]Anthony Ifen Umoren "Jesus Greater than a Sage: Elements of Ancient Rhetoric and Divine Wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7)" Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat (ed): Pan African Association of Catholic Exegetes, Human Wisdom and Divine Wisdom in the Bible (Makuyu-Kenya: Don Bosco Printing Press) 125-139.

acts that the Christian truly worships God and that all other acts of worship attain proper value."[357] For Ukpong through good works Christians are doing two fundamental duties namely, responding to the demands of Christ and influencing others to do the same. Hence, "A life that is open to God and other people is more likely to render true worship rather than a life that is closed."[358] From the above assertion, there is no way one can influence another by hiding away from the person(s) one wants to influence. Jesus encourages the observance of the spirit of the Law instead of the letters of the Law (Matt 5:14-48). This is in accordance with what Isa 29:13 rejects when it says, "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me." The understanding of Matt 5:13-16 constitutes no obstacle to Christians in Nigeria what constitutes the greatest challenge is the Nigerian socio-cultural and political situation and courage to live it out despite all odds.

5.3. Challenges Facing Christians in Nigeria in Responding to Matt 5:13-16

We discovered through our exegesis that Jesus never asked his disciples to disown their father land or to abhor any profession or vocation so as to be "salt of the earth" and "light of the world". He wants them to make a change wherever they find themselves. This means that they are expected to permeate all professions or vocations in the world and transform them to the greater glory of God. Thus, if Christians were to see themselves in different professions and they are true to their vocation of being salt and light then there is no doubt that they will transform those professions and vocations; this is because

[357]Justin Ukpong New Testament Essays (Lagos: Campbell Publishers, 1995) 83.

[358] Ukpong, 85.

"Light is not just a figure for true being but true being is light."[359].

Being salt demands suffering and martyrdom because the effects of salt on food in terms of adding flavour is noticed after the salt must have disappeared or after it must have lost its physical appearance. The salt that added flavour to a particular food cannot be seen again. The same thing is applicable to light if we use candle light as an example. The candle dies continually as it gives light. Salt is always able to add flavour to food no matter what because what makes it able to add flavour is in its very nature, it is not imported into it. In the same way, no matter the thickness of the darkness, light continues to shine because it is in its nature to shine. Even the thicker the darkness the brighter the light no matter how small or faint. Just as it is in the nature of salt and light to add flavour and shine respectively, it is supposed to be in the nature of a Christian to be exemplary or going right when every other person is following left. A Christian who is not exemplary is a contradiction and hence not worthy of the name. For Christians not to be exemplary "would lead them to becoming good for nothing, being thrown out and trodden under foot by people."[360] Nigeria as a nation provides situations that challenge Christians in their bid to be salt and light (Matt 5:13-16). Nigeria is continually being destroyed by four great vices namely, bribery and corruption, materialism and religious fanaticism.[361] We shall divide the challenges into four namely, political, economic, social and religious challenges.

[359] Conzelmann 314.

[360] Umoren 125-139.

[361] John Odey The Anti-Corruption Crusade: The Saga of a Crippled Giant (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2001) 48.

To live out the demands of Matt 5:13-16 despite the above four challenges call to mind the assertions of Jesus, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world . . . but sword . . ." (Matt 10:34-39). This is because anyone who dares to live a life contrary to that of the world, must be ready for the consequences. Studying these challenges will enable us to appreciate the conditions Christians in Nigeria find themselves and under which they must live and practice their faith. To read through the pages of the book written by Nathaniel Ndiokwere which he titles, "Only in Nigeria" published in 2006 reveals a lot of these challenges. Though there are hyperboles in that book but 68% of the contents are as it is in Nigeria today.

5.3.1. Economic Challenges:

Things are generally very difficult in Nigeria for common people. People do all sorts of things to survive. What readily comes to mind include, the importation of fake and adulterated drugs, substandard goods, taking what belongs to others, even lying to make ends meet, receiving of salary without working or receiving of two salaries without working for any of them, etc. Hence, putting the level of poverty and ignorance in the land into consideration, one may not be making any mistake if one concludes that "Keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam."[362] Synod of Bishops II Special Assembly for Africa rightly pointed out in their final resolution as they conclude the session thus, "We live in a world full of contradictions and deep crisis."[363] This is even truer of Nigeria where some people have suddenly

[362] Chinua Achebe The Trouble with Nigeria (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1983) 38.

[363] VATICAN: Africa Synod Final Draft, No. 4. October 26, 2009.

become refugees even in their home country[364] as a result of religious and ethnic riots which no doubt were motivated by socio-political and economic problems bedevilling Nigerian nation. Some people have suddenly become beggars over-night, some are wallowing in abject poverty, disease and hunger.[365] So many people work hard to get admission into the tertiary institutions and because they have no money to bribe their way, their positions are taken by the rich. Those who have no money to bribe their way may do some other things that are against their faith so as to succeed. One is bound to call to mind here what happens in some Universities, Colleges of Education as well as our Polytechnics. A case in point is the "Sex-for-Mark's Lecturer, of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife who was dragged to court and sentenced for six years in prison for demanding sex to pass one of his students. Both the lecturer and student are Christians. This case is one out of uncountable ones that no one had ever heard of. Justice Maureen Onyetenu, the Chief Judge who handed down the sentences that would run concurrently for two years said,

> The menace is getting to secondary and primary schools. I am a pastor and a counsellor. I know mental torture many of our female students have been subjected to by the likes of the respondent (Prof. Akindele Iyiola Richard). The adverse effect of such action is huge. Many of his likes have been awarding marks to those students that

[364] Anietie Akpan "Bakassi: Refugees in Their Fatherland" The Guardian 25/10581 (Sunday Dec. 16, 2007) 21.

[365] Demola Abimboye "The Damage Religious Crises Have Done to the North" Newswatch, Nigerian's Weekly Newsmagazine (Nov. 2, 2009) 10-21.

> are ready to warm their beds, thereby releasing half-baked graduates into the society.[366]

A cursory look at the Nigerian roads especially in the Southern part reveals that there are road blocks that seem to have doubly replaced the former toll gates in Nigeria which Obasanjo administration removed from the Nigerian roads. At these road blocks, uniformed men and women which include Army, Highway Patrol Agents,[367] Federal Road Safety Corps of Nigeria (FRSCN), as well as Joint Task Force (JTF) collect illegal levies which range from N50 to N500 from motorists. If one wants to pass unchecked then one must illegally pay one's due and continue one's journey unmolested.

This mandatory collection by the police, military, etc., is binding on all motorists especially the public transporters. On the part of the motorist it is not negotiable whereas on the part of the uniformed men and women majority of Nigerian citizens believe that they must collect this money and report back to those who posted them to keep vigil on those roads. There is no doubt that this type of illegal collections has rendered them impotent in carrying out their normal responsibility while on duty. It is good to note that at the end of the month in addition to whatever they collect every day, they still collect their salaries. Our concern is that both the collection of the money and paying of the money are illegal. There is no denying the fact that among these uniformed men and women as well as among motorists who pay these illegal dues and those who collect them are numerous Christians. The situation is a serious

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[366] Osogbo Bola Bamigbola, Punchng.com. Published on December 17, 2018. Retrieved on 03/01/2019.

[367] Nathaniel Ndiokwere Only in Nigeria (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2006) 2.

challenge to their Christian faith as Matt 5:13-16 demands. If a Christian as government agent refuses to collect such a due, it may lead to the termination of his appointment or he may deny himself or herself of any promotion or alternatively, he or she may receive unscheduled transfer. And should a Christian commercial motorist refuses to pay, he may end his day's trip at the police checkpoint. Hence the environment is not economically conducive at all for weak Christians to practice their faith.

5.3.2. Social Challenges:

The social challenges Christians in Nigeria are facing emanate from the environment. This is because of environmental conditions. It is always difficult to see people living differently from the ethics of their environment. Environment is like the air, water, language and culture which every growing child gets from where it is born. Hence, if the stream is moving downwards there is every possibility that every creature living in that stream would always follow the stream easily on its downward movement. To do otherwise would be swimming against current; such a contrary movement no doubt could lead to untimely death or crises or even ending up among the paupers. Let us consider few examples.

In Nigeria, certificate is more valuable than the output of the possessor of the so called certificate. Hence, education has been bastardized in Nigeria to the extent that majority of students no longer trust their natural intelligence for passing any examination so as to obtain the requisite certificate. There must always be external help before a student can pass well in any examination. One without the requisite intelligence must get grade one in WAEC, GCE, NECO and JAMB through what is termed today in Nigeria as "Miracle Examination Centres." The essence of this is for them to obtain results that

will ensure their entrance into any of the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Anybody who registers in these centres passes his or her examinations without any stress and anyone who dares not to go through them may remain a problem candidate for several years. In order to "make it" like others through the above centres, some students through their parents[368] contribute money so as to settle examiners- flying invigilators, external and most especially the internal examiners who will take care of all others.[369] The essence of the contribution is to enable students to copy during the examinations unmolested or for the examiners to find the alternative way of helping the students to pass the examination. This is why majority of students change schools on their Senior Secondary Two or Three. To crown it, examination papers reach the highest bidders few days before the actual examination. All these are done so that all without exception must have access to University Education whether qualified or not. The ugly thing is that the parents who pay this money sell whatever they can lay their hands on so as to meet up with such practices; and nobody really wants to be left out. This type of trend has presented itself as an Idol impossible to resist worshipping by parents, their children and wards as well as teachers. If you do not do it, your entrance into the tertiary institution must be delayed and you won't be like others. Who would like to be left out in the bandwagon of "success"?

After examinations what follows is aptitude test in some universities or tertiary institutions. Here again the order of the day is most often sorting.[370] And you can't sort without money

[368]Adeyinka Taiwo Oyemade (The President of All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) "Blame Parents for Exam Fraud" Daily Sun. 3/861 (Dec. 5, 2006) 16.

[369] Ndiokwere 144-145.

[370] Using money to gain undue advantage.

or equivalent otherwise your name may not be included no matter how intelligent you may claim to be. One wonders what happens when one enters such tertiary institution unmerited. Take for example one who wants to be a medical doctor or pharmacist and pays his or her way through. The sorting will be endless, he will be sorting until he graduates and only God knows the type of harm he will be doing to the health of people after graduation. This situation poses great challenges to Christian students who must go to school and parents whose children and wards must go to school. If one succumbs to the pressure of the society which implies passing examination the way of the world so as to be like others, then one is no longer responding according to the demands of Matt 5:13-16.

Using money to gain undue advantage is not limited to the process of entering any of the tertiary institutions; it is seen also in some interviews into certain offices. In Nigeria today, there are so many people looking for employment and opportunities are rare to come by. So, any available job opportunity must be pursued to be occupied by all at the same time. This is to the extent that during such interviews to fill any vacant office, money or its equivalent plays a very serious role and at the end, the best brain or minds and most qualified are sometimes dropped while the unqualified ones are taken. Also, people with clear records of goodness, perfect performance in duties, known for their transparent honesty and hard work are most often not considered for higher posts in governments, and even in the church. Some citizens with criminal records of untold magnitude are worshipped, given positions of honour and titles[371] because of the culture of

[371] Babajide Kolade-Otitoju "Overdraft Billionaires" The News 33/17 (Nov. 2, 2009) 18-22.

affluence that is bedevilling Nigeria.[372] All these are serious challenges to Christians. For instance, a Christian who sees what is happening and realizes that the only option left for him is to use money to gain such an undue advantage and went ahead to do it so as not to be left behind has abandoned his vocation of being salt and light.

The Nigeria where Christians must live and practice their faith has been described by some as being anomic. Anomic "characterizes a condition in which individual's desires are no longer regulated by common norms and where, as a consequence individuals are left without moral guidance in the pursuit of their goals."[373] Nigeria has suddenly turned into a place "Where people have lost the basic orientation for a meaningful existence; where evil deeds and actions have been gradually installed as acceptable values; where criminals of all ranks are hailed and crowned for making it; a situation where the social patterns and structures for organized meaningful co-existence have been disordered."[374] Today, lamentably, according to Uzodimma Nwala, "the nation is hostage to corruption. Materialism has taken charge of the soul of the nation. Corruption and materialism have become our religion and have permeated our sacred institutions including the religious, educational and traditional institution."[375] Chinua Achebe summarily says,

> My frank and honest opinion is that anybody who says that corruption in Nigeria has not yet

[372] Ndiokwere 144-145.

[373] L.A. Coser Masters of Sociology and Thought (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971) 133.

[374] Emeka G. Ekwuru The Pangs of An African Culture in Travail (Owerri, Nigeria: Totan Publishers Ltd, 1999) 86.

[375] Uzodimma Nwala Nigeria: Path to Unity and Stability (Nsukka: University Trust Publishers, 1997) 169.

> become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country . . . corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage; and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed.[376]

In the face of all these, a Christian has two options namely, either to say no to the promptings of corruption and accept the pains associated with that or to say no to the demands of Matt 5:13-16.

The media presents one with immodest dressings and behaviours. This is portrayed by the Nigerian artistes in some of the films they act. Some "Nigerian movies portray Nigeria as a country still in dark ages, a country where only evil thrives, a country morally, socially and spiritually bankrupt."[377] Nigerian youths are watching them and are socializing through them. Nigerian roads and streets showcase different styles of dressings and make-ups especially for our womenfolk. Some women struggle for them so as to be relevant and attractive to their likes. This is what they watch from the movies; both from the local and foreign media.

Tailors are also making honest effort so as to meet up with such demands. This is to the extent that today we have such styles as dirty and rugged jeans with patches, holes and tears here and there, especially at strategic points, transparent gowns with show backs and show fronts, extraordinary miniskirts of all kinds.[378] They are mostly worn by students in their

[376] Achebe 37.
[377] Ndiokwere, 84.
[378] Amasiatu 58.

campuses; some wear them outside the campuses maybe to attract the opposite sex. These dresses may not allow one to bend down or raise hands up without exposing some vital parts of the body hence leading people to find problem with injunctions of Jesus in Matt 6:27-28. To put these on according to occasions make one to belong otherwise one counts oneself out. These constitute sources of temptation for the Christians either to start dressing like others or to say we must show the right way. Again, to show the right way in the face of all these may not be easy for Christians; but they will overcome them if they are really Christians.

Falsehood is present almost in every field of endeavour. Falsification of documents which includes even baptismal and birth certificates; the essence of that is to retain oneself longer in certain offices or to hide vital information as regards the person who is falsifying. Some traders have seen falsehood as part and parcel of business. Adulterated goods are sold in the name of genuine goods; there are a lot of cover-ups in the offices which sometimes lead to the burning down of public offices just to cover-up one atrocity or the other.[379] Some Government personnel rarely sign the exact time they arrive at their offices and the time to leave. The mobile telephones have also contributed enormously to the falsehood level in the country. Some people rarely say at the exact spot they are while answering calls. There are a lot of unfaithfulness and insincerity in many quarters.

In 2005, Seat of Wisdom Major Seminary Owerri conducted the verification of results submitted by candidates who wanted

[379] Anambra State Board of Internal Revenue (ASBIR) Office in Awka was set ablaze by unknown persons around 4.30 a.m. on Saturday 5th May, 2007. Daily Independent. 3/1217 (May 7, 2007) 1.

to become priests in the Holy Roman Catholic Church and it was discovered that some candidates had submitted fake G.C.E results. Some of these candidates were already in fourth year Philosophy and some already in theology. Those who succeeded through this illegal means to get admission usually give clues to their likes for them to try what they tried and succeeded. Anthony Ezeoke also narrated similar experience which happened when he was a rector of a junior seminary.[380] As a result of apparent success associated with falsehood, it has become attractive to some people. Because of these apparent success associated with falsehood, it portends danger for Christians in their response to the demands of Matt 5:13-16.

To vividly present the picture of the challenges Christians face in Nigeria, it is good to note that evil men and women know themselves. They form a sort of clique that unless you belong, you may never climb to the ladder of authority or even to obtain contracts you are most qualified to handle; unless you belong to that clique or powerful group that rule the country since independence. As a result of this, some Christians continue to sell their birthright for a mere pot of porridge. Hence Victor Inoka says, "Nigeria has become like a cult organization where only the interests of its members are protected. A few cabals in the society arrogate to themselves the power and capacity to turn Nigeria round any way they

[380]Rev. Fr. Bar. Anthony Ezeoke, Chaplain St Augustine's Chaplaincy Oko, Anambra State. 4/2/2010. According to him, a certain student was admitted into the seminary with almost A1 in all the papers including English and Mathematics. When he saw the result he was enthusiastic and had wanted to deploy him to teach English Language in the seminary for one year before proceeding to the Spiritual Year Formation. He was advised by one of the priests on the staff to verify the result. At the WAEC office at Yaba Lagos, it was discovered that his name was in the computer but the picture attached to the result was a female.

like."[381] If you have money you belong, if not you do not belong. The culture of affluence is reflected in the Igbo saying: "*Onye nwe ego, onwee umunna*" (he who has money has kindred). This saying is almost replacing another positive saying that signifies that unity is strength- "*Umunna bu ike*" (kindred is strength).

5.3.3. Religious Challenges

According to the Synod Fathers, "Africa in recent years has also become very fertile ground for religious vocations: priests, brothers and sisters."[382] This is even truer of Nigeria which, as we explained in chapter three, has numerous religious men and women leaders of the church not only among the Catholics but much more among the Protestants. Hence there have been several articles and books and even Magazine reports that state clearly that a lot of evil are being perpetrated today in Nigeria in the name of religion.[383] This is dealt in details in chapter three above. They are part of the obstacles that hinder Christians from being faithful to their vocation of being the "Salt" and "Light" to the society.

The worst thing that can happen to a Christian couple is to be childless in a country where a man without a child is regarded as one without a base. Catholic Christians know how painful this state could be since Catholic Doctrine emphasizes monogamy. Hence, for the Catholics, to marry a second wife because of the childlessness means an outright rejection of the sacraments of the Church as well as a befitting Christian burial

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[381] Victor Inoka "The Anomic Condition of Sharp and Fraudulent Practices in Nigeria" The Oracle, 1/3, (2003) 135.

[382] VATICAN: Africa Synod Final Draft, No. 21.

[383] Demola Abimboye, Danusa Ocholi, Dike Onwuamaeze, Ishaya Ibrahim "A Pastor's Business Empire" Newswatch 51/13 (March 29, 2010) 17-21.

at one's death. The essence of marriage in African culture is to beget children, a child is not even enough. And when they talk of children they mean most especially male children. Male children are preferred to female ones. So marriage that is not blessed with children is never regarded as a fulfilled one in the Nigerian-African culture where Christians live and practice their faith. Hence, the "Search for male issues has driven many Nigerians to the madness of marrying many wives and damning the consequences."[384] By so doing, they are also showing others another way of achieving what could not be achieved in the first marriage if they happen to succeed.

Even if the childless did not look for a second wife to make up for the lack, he involves himself in all sorts of double dealings or double allegiance. This is because most Nigerians especially Igbo believe that nothing happens without a cause. Whatever happens on the negative must have been caused by evil men and women in the world. Anything they do to bring about positive result must be done in secret so as not to receive any sanction from the church. Some move from one church to the other or even consulting of the witches and wizards. This also provides opportunity for fraudulent pastors who are scattered almost in all nooks and crannies of the country and who claim to have solution to all human problems. These all round problem-solver-pastors are now seen in all denominations. So whatever is your problem, be it childlessness, sickness of all sorts including AIDS, all of them have one name "Spiritual Attack" and must be handled by a special "Man of God."[385] So because there are special men of God who solve all problems in secret, some Christians engage themselves in all kinds of "*olu ezinulo*" (family prayer done by

[384] Ndiokwere, 16.
[385] Ndiokwere, 51.

the so called "prayer experts"). This involves a lot of manipulations; because these "prayer experts" or pastors are making it, new churches are springing up every now and then. Hence, Amasiatu says,

> For many Christians today, the church is not for better for worse, it is only for better. When things go well in and with their lives, they belong to God and go to church but in difficult or trial moments they abandon God and his church and resort to healing homes, fortune-tellers, witches and wizards.[386]

There are fakes almost in all quarters. Fake ministers make it materially. Anyone therefore who wants to make it must either join them or devise his own way. Listening to the Rivers State Television and others for instance means attending one ministry or the other; it is always a praying and preaching galore. Each one that speaks or preaches must conclude by giving his /her viewers his or her phone number for prayer and counselling. Their preaching is almost tending towards the same direction- prosperity gospel. For instance, if one is not successful, there is a yoke, curse, spiritual blindness which must be broken if one wants to succeed in life.

There are several monetary ministries almost in all Christian denominations of our nation today. On 23rd Feb. 2010 a lay Christian forwarded a text to me which he got from one of the priests who wanted to make it in the way of the world. This shows glimpse of the picture of what people pass through in Nigeria even from the hands of the ordained ministers of

[386] Amasiatu 74.

God.[387] They also impoverish people in order to enrich themselves.

The result is that today in Nigeria, there are many church goers but very few Christians.[388] How do we know church goers? It is not easy but certain things can prove that,

> On their necks and fingers you find medals, crosses, scapulars, rosaries, and around their waist and inside their bodies they wear and implant charms and medicines. Beside their beds, on the tables and walls and doors-posts you find Holy Waters, Holy Pictures and other sacramentals; but under their beds and in various angles and corners of their houses and

[387] This is a text message sent by a certain Rev. Fr. to Mr. Goddy Njoku on 16th Feb., 2010. This type of text is not usually sent to everybody, most often it is sent to the rich and well-to-do people. We are happy that Mr. Njoku is not an infant in the Christian faith. The text reads: Dear friend, you are one of the 2307 blessed people who presently receive our inspirational prayers and enjoy the weekly Mass. We target to reach out to at least 50,000 souls through this very effective medium by June 2010. We can! Would you mind supporting this apostolate? Please call . . . on 08134348528 or 08023062860. You can pay into Zenith Bank, 6020083145 . . . Even N1000 would go a long way. May God Bless the Work of your hands and make your life one of testimonies. Thank you. Miracles are real. Mass was said for your special intention yesterday. Please send your prayer request for Ash-Wednesday Mass. Kindly send 5-10 numbers of people you would want to benefit in this program. When the recipient enquired about the identity of the sender, he wrote back: "Dear friend, the appeal message you got this morning is from me . . . Pelican is the BULK SMS Company we use. Thanks for your support of this apostolate."

[388]Richard Akinjide (SAN) "Nigeria Will Not Break Up. We have Gone This Path Before" Sunday Champion 23/016 (April 18, 2010) 32-33.

> compounds you discover charms, amulets and talismans.[389]

Synod Fathers were aware of the great number of Christians all over Africa and that is why it could conclusively say to the laity in Africa, you are Christ's ambassadors. This requires of you to allow your Christian faith to permeate every aspect and facet of your lives; in the family, at work, in the professions, in politics and public life. The implication of this is that if the Christians in Africa have been living according to Christ's characterization of his followers in Matt 5:13-16 then African continent would not have been described as a nation of contradictions and deep crisis.[390]

5.3.4. Political Challenges

In politics a lot is also happening. Rigging has almost become the order of the day in politics. In Nigeria, people in the past had won election while remaining in prison. It had happened in the case of one "honourable member of the House of Representatives," from the South West as well as in the case of one serving South Eastern Governor.[391] In fact, "The way the 2003 elections were conducted in Nigeria reveals to discerning minds and experts who read the signs of the times (signi

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[389] Amasiatu 77.

[390] VATICAN: Africa Synod Final Draft, No. 4. October 26, 2009.

[391] Iyiola Omisore who was facing trial at an Oyo State High Court over the murder of former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige who was murdered on Dec. 23, 2001, won Senatorial Seat despite the fact that he was in detention. See Seun Adeoye "PDP Wins Big in Benue, Omisore gets Senatorial Seat" The Guardian 19/8910 (April 14, 2003) 1-2. Again, candidate for the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) that won the elections in Abia State as Governor, Chief Theodore Ahamefule Orji was currently in detention in Lagos on allegations of corruption before he won the election. See Sam Hart "Time to Give Kalu His Due" Daily Sun 3/958 (April 20, 2007) 9.

temporum) that Nigeria as a state is travelling on a highway to absolute totalitarianism."[392] To arrive at the enthronement of one who never won election, or who is not supposed to have won, then some people must have accepted money so as to cast their vote, stuff the ballot boxes with fake ballot papers and even write the result of the election before the election or falsely multiply the result in favour of their candidates.[393] That the above facts are real, reveal that poverty and ignorance are ravaging the land. The people who collect these inducements so as to sell their conscience are in a very tight corner and thus throw the admonitions of Matt 5:13-16 to the winds. Most of them collect these financial inducements so as to meet up with their other illegal sorting activities. It is disheartening to hear that "all that matters for the Nigerian is Naira acquisition, the easier, perhaps the fouler the means, the better for them."[394]
In the face of all these, Christians are helpless either to show example or to make positive pronouncements in condemnation of such because of economic implications such pronouncement might carry. To capture the type of scenario most Christians used to find themselves in the face of illegalities or enthronement of evil, Eboh says,

> The election of 2003 exposed the local church in Nigeria to ridicule. Like the church in a persecuted environment, opinions and actions of the hierarchy and official representatives of the

[392] Simeon Eboh "The Nigerian Road Map to Totalitarianism-Which Way the Church?" KOINONIA 1/4 (2004) 28.

[393] Simon O. Anyanwu "Money: The Bane of Nigerian Politics, Some Possible Remedies for the Objectionable Trend" KOINONIA 1/4 (2004) 11.

[394] Chukwudum Barnabas Okolo Squandamania Mentality: Reflection on the Nigerian Culture (Nsukka, Nigeria: University Trust Publishers, 1994) 14.

> church varied remarkably. While some unequivocally condemned the travesty, others overlooked the fraud and lied openly in favour of the "winning" party by stating that "the elections were free and fair." Some were even the first to go personally to congratulate the "winning" candidates for their election "victory."[395]

These congratulatory messages may attract thanksgiving services in the churches of the false pastors. Inability to say things that should be said and preferring to cover the truth so as to avoid "over heating the polity" is really a ploy to be like everybody. In the past, some people in Nigeria had landed themselves in prison severally in defence of the truth and some died as a result of such situations. Nelson Mandela suffered the same fate in South Africa in his fight against apartheid in his country. Wole Soyinka slept severally in prison in his fight against corruption in Nigeria. The question maybe, how many Nigerian bishops and priests have been able to experience the prison situation of our country as a result of speaking out against injustices and oppression? Is it because they are too comfortable that they do not know what people are passing through in Nigeria? "The Christian cannot remain silent, unconcerned about the conditions existing in our society, about poverty, ignorance, disease, injustice and all-pervasive materialism. A silent Christian in the face of all these ills is either dumb, inert, or simply dead."[396] Hence could be thrown away and trodden upon.

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[395] Eboh, 39.

[396] J. K. Aniagwu "The Implications of Being a Christian" The Fountain Magazine, vol.19 (2002) 7.

Economic, social, religious, and political challenges discussed above show us two things namely: Firstly, authentic Christians in Nigeria are seriously swimming against current every day in their effort to live as salt and light in the Nigerian nation. Secondly that in the face of all these challenges, some Christians have concluded that it is not workable or practicable for them to live as salt of the earth and light of the world in the Nigerian context. In other words, according to what I observed in the course of writing this book that there are Christians in Nigeria who are making honest efforts despite all odds and there are also those who say that one has to be alive before one can practice Christianity. This last group are those who compromise their faith.

Traditionally, Christians in Nigeria are not supposed to find much problem in living out the demands of Matt 5:13-16 despite the culture of affluence, impunity, bribery and corruption in Nigeria today. This is because the demands of Matt 5:13-16 are directly or indirectly imbedded in Nigerian-African culture even before these negative tendencies reared their ugly heads. The implication of the above statement is that the culture of affluence, impunity, falsehood, reaping where one did not plant, indecency, double allegiance, bribery and corruption, though are not completely foreign to the Nigerian traditional culture but they are not as pronounced as they are today. They all became more pronounced with advent of modernity; which has a link with the method the Europeans used in the colonization of Africa. This no doubt affected the implantation of Christianity in Nigeria. Hence, Christianity seems not to have been properly planted in Nigeria or deeply rooted in the culture of the recipients (Nigerians). Double dealing or the above mentioned challenges are not fully and completely part of Africans originally and are not part of Christianity either. Let us therefore see what were really

African from the beginning before her encounter with colonization and which were highly cherished than all the above mentioned negative tendencies.

5.4. African Traditional Values and the Demands of Matt 5:13-16

Before Africans as a whole and Nigerians in particular encountered European colonizers, they had values that had sustained their collective existence. They were not a valueless society, hence were under the protection of the gods. These values would have assisted Christianity to have deeper taproot if the founding fathers or evangelists that brought the good-news were to have knowledge of them then. They would have helped to make Christianity enjoy wider acceptance than it has today. But this was not possible because between the colonizers, evangelizers and Nigerians there were cultural and language barriers. Thus, they labelled the religion and culture they met as completely devilish.

Again, some of the evangelizers were not given free hands to operate. Hence whatever they do they had to consider the interest of those who granted them entrance into the country and who are providing them with security. For instance, as we said in chapter three above, the Portuguese priests who came to Benin were not solely representing the interest of the Catholic Church but also the interest of the king of Portugal which is the expansion of his trade. This must have affected the way they operated and subsequent failure of their missionary enterprise in Benin Kingdom.[397] Hence the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries were against one another because of economic

[397] C.A. Imokhai "The Evolution of the Catholic Church in Nigeria" The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Lagos: Macmillan, 1982) 2.

interests and not really because of religious interest (Christianity).

In Chapter Three also we made an assessment of the relationship that existed between the Royal Niger Company (RNC), Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) and the Holy Ghost Missionaries that made the Catholic mission more popular than C.M.S. in the Southern Nigeria.[398] Under this type of scenario, unhealthy rivalry must have been created between the C.M.S and Holy Ghost missionaries and this no doubt must have affected the psyche of the people being evangelized and colonized. The situation must have also led to the emergence of sycophants as well as financial inducement from the colonizers to retain the sycophants. Consequently some of the most cherished African (Nigerian) values must have been thrown to the winds. Such values include justice, communalism, honesty and sincerity, etc. It is good to state immediately that these values are not foreign to Christianity. They are almost at the heart of Christianity, but because of the cultural and language barriers that existed between them and because of the unhealthy competition that emanated in the midst of R.N.C., C.M.S and Roman Catholic Missionaries, majority of Nigerians seem to have lost those values. These values need to be reemphasized, adapted, reabsorbed, and blended with the Gospel faith and values to enable the Nigerian Christian live out his status of salt and light. They include:

[398] Celestine A. Obi "The Royal Niger Company and the Holy Ghost Mission at Onitsha 1885-1900" The Catholic Church in Onitsha, People, Places and Events (1885-1985) 1.

5.4.1 Communalism

In the midst of the challenges facing Christians in Nigeria in their bid to live according to the demands of Matt 5:13-16, communalism is one of the African values which if it is revived among Christians in Nigeria it will go a long way to alleviate the challenges the socio-cultural and economic situations of Nigeria impose on Christians. The pronoun Matthean Jesus used in Matt 5:13a, 14a is a communal pronoun –*humeis* "you" (plural). Jesus carefully selected this word to tell his disciples that he was not talking of individualism but communalism. This is one of the most cherished of African values. The concept of communalism is captured by one African word *Ujamaa* proposed through the philosophy of Julius Nyerere. This single word signifies togetherness, family-hood which does not really depend on consanguinity; instead it depicts a community spirit of togetherness which sees all as brothers.[399] In Antioch it was the community of believers that were called Christians and not just a member as such (Acts 11:26). This idea is what Johannine Jesus emphasized when he was encouraging his disciples to love one another. He believes strongly that if they as a community love one another, people would know that they are his disciples (John 13:34-35). In Africa, bond of love is established by eating[400] and drinking together as people of the same family.[401]

Everything is done to preserve the unity of a given community. There are certain things that are put in place for the continual

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[399] Oliver A. Onwubiko African Thought, Religion and Culture vol. 1 (Enugu: Snaap Press, 1971) 17.

[400] Gregory Olikenyi African Hospitality, A Model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural Context (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2001)122.

[401] Geoffrey Parrinder African Traditional Religion (London: Sheldon Press, 1981) 87.

existence of the community. There are certain things one is not expected to do or say and there are those one is expected to do or say. Mbiti says, "to safeguard the welfare of the community, there are many taboos concerning what may not be done and the consequences of doing so . . . It is taboo in many African societies for a person to marry a close relative. Breaking this taboo constitutes a breach of morals within the community."[402]

The picture Paul created in 1 Cor 12 (esp v.12) is really an African picture of communalism. The suffering of one is the suffering of the entire community and the fortune of an individual is that of the community. From that line of thought "Poverty was a foreign concept. This could only be really brought about to the entire community by an adverse climate during a particular season. It never was considered repugnant to ask one's neighbours for help if one was struggling. In almost all instances there was help between individuals, tribe, chief and chief, etc. even in spite of war."[403] Every extended family takes care of their immediate families, every community takes care of their extended families and thus everybody is taken care of.[404]

Africans believe that individuals are defined and identified by their community. An individual is not greater than the community but community gives meaning to all and greater than all. "The authentic African is known and identified in, by

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[402] John S. Mbiti Introduction to Africa Religion (London: Heinemann, 1977) 178.

[403] http:www.emeka.at/African_cultural_values.pdf (retried on 20th Feb. 2010).

[404] G.M.A. Adedeji "God, Evil, and Salvation in African Traditional Religion" The Nigerian Journal of Theology, vol. 14, 2000, p 52.

and through his community. The community is the custodian of the individual; hence he must go where the community goes."[405] At the market squares where community used to gather together, there is always a shrine which is the major custodian of the community. As long as one is within the ambient of the community, one is under the protection and control of the deity. The deity in question punishes, acquits or rewards individual members of the community as the case maybe. Any member of any community that is in communion with his community is a symbol of his community outside his community and if anything happens to him, his community and deity must look for him. Hence Kongo puts it thus, "A man outside his clan is like a grasshopper which has lost its wings."[406] This means, an individual that is under excommunication is powerless and armless. A person can only be truly safe in a safe community and vice versa. His modesty, in short his culture depends largely on the community he comes from. Every community has a way of checks and balances through which it controls her members. Every community therefore knows how to take care of the anomalous behaviours of her members.

To buttress the fact that Matthean Jesus was most interested in the well being of whole body of his followers he employed yet another word that points towards togetherness and that word is *polis.* Though this word is a singular word but it derives its name from what it holds or contains. A house as we x-rayed in chapter four cannot answer a city but conglomeration of houses. A tree we know does not make a forest. An Igbo

[405] Onwubiko 14.

[406] Kongo in http:www.emeka.at/African_cultural_values.pdf (retried on 20th Feb. 2010).

adage comes to mind here, *Otu ukwu adighi acha mbara* (One foot does not create a road.) This does not mean that when the majority is deviating from the known standard that one or two individuals cannot bring them back to normalcy hence the Igbo adage, *Otu aka metu mmanu, o metu ndi ozo* "when one finger touches oil, it spread to others." This signifies that a community that lives together accepts whatever that is good that comes its way and collectively rejects what is against their communal existence.

Christians in Nigeria have the value of communalism in their culture which should knit them closely together. This value that is fundamental to their existence as African ought to help them to see one another as partners in progress, as the community Jesus identified as salt and light. If they see themselves and live as such people would readily identify them as followers of Christ. Hence this book submits that Jesus' characterization of his disciples in Matt 5:13-16 is communalistic though its individualistic tendency is not denied. This is because goodness is contagious.

5.4.2. Honesty and Sincerity

This is one of the highly esteemed values of Africans. It is expressed in one of the Igbo maxims like, Eziokwu bu ndu "truth is life." It is a general view that one's dishonesty and insincerity has effect on the collective well being of the community. This is why anyone caught in any act of dishonesty and insincerity will never go unpunished. Any behaviour associated with the above is regarded as evil. Murder, stealing of all sorts especially cash crops like yam, coco yam, cola, etc, not to talk of embezzlement of money kept in one's custody, false witnesses against one's neighbour, adultery or fornication with another's wife, husband, daughter or son are seriously frowned at and indeed they are taboos.

Premarital sex, abortion are seriously abhorred. Anyone caught in any of the above mentioned taboos must perform certain rituals so as to appease the gods or else the person will experience some setbacks in his household and the community will excommunicate him or her lest he brings curse to the entire community. Any African therefore who wants to express his innocence would always say, "Have I ever stolen, or been caught with another man's wife, etc?" "In traditional Igbo society, even the stealing of a cock, yam, cocoyam, or cassava was a serious crime."[407] Once one sees himself free from all that, one raises his head high.

Africans fight fence-sitters with passion. We have such fence-sitters today in the name of neo-paganism. It is one of the highest forms of insincerity. Okolo writes, "The number one problem of Christians in Igboland and most likely throughout Africa is nominal Christianity, being half Christians, half pagans, half God worshippers, half devil worshippers, half believers in God, the angels and the saints, and half believers in juju, fortune-telling, magic, superstition and the abracadabra religious rites and symbols."[408] What this signifies is that we do not have any problem of numbers in the Christian fold, what we have is the problem of the lack of convinced Christians.[409] Hence "many people claim to be Christians today because they are baptized, have their names in the church register and pay

[407] Ndiokwere, 137.

[408] Barnabas Okolo "Igbo Culture and Evangelization: An Inculturation Perspective" Bigard Theological Studies (B.T.S.) 19/1, 1999, p.76.

[409] Jude Emeka Madu "The Crisis of Superficiality in the Nigerian Church: A Reflection from An Igbo-View-Point" The Nigerian Journal of Theology vol. 14, June 2000, p.27.

their church dues just to have a beautiful Christian funeral and burial when they die."[410]

Among Africans, especially among the Igbo of Nigeria there is a traditional status reserved for only those who have excelled in the life of honesty and sincerity and by implication, for those who are living a fulfilled life -*Nze na Ozo;* their women counterparts are given the title of *Lolo.* Before one attends to this status one must have been married with children. These people are known as the chief custodian of the morality of their society. They are highly revered members of the society. If one catches any of them committing any of the taboos mentioned above, the person who catches him takes over the offender's *Ozo* title and the culprit will be automatically striped of his titles and becomes a lay man with a lot of penalties associated with it. The reason behind all these is that among Africans "Evil is seen as a disruption of the holistic quality of their life and it is jointly condemned. Evil creates a barrier between them and God, and between the living and the ancestral world. Evil, in short, is the moral, social, political and religious disorder in the community."[411] Again, "Evil to Africans means a breach of covenant. African community is based on covenant relationship- person to person, person to divinity, and person to God. This covenant relationship is maintained and nurtured by good moral order, understanding, caring, loving, and community organization."[412] Everything is almost done so as to maintain such relationship, for to break it means untold hardship or calamity both on the person who did it and to the community as a whole if the community has not

[410] Amasiatu, 107.
[411] Adedeji 52.
[412] Adedeji 47.

discovered and punished the offender either through performance of certain rituals or excommunication.
When Jesus was telling his disciples that they are the salt of the earth and light of the world, he was telling them to be above suspicion so that people will see them and give glory to their Father who is in heaven. Anyone therefore who lives according to the African value of honesty and sincerity is a true light of the world and salt of the earth (Matt 5:13-16). These two values are communal in outlook for they make way for both vertical and horizontal relationships.

5.4.3. Respect for Life

The Africans prize life above everything else. This is reflected in most African names like *Ndubuaku* (life is wealth), *Ndubisi* (Life first), *Ndubueze* (Life is royal), *Adindu* (Life brings about every possibilities). Also such statements as "Aghara ndu kpaa aku, onyeiro erie" (if wealth is pursued to the detriment of life, the enemy will enjoy the wealth at the rich's death.) All these names and phrases emphasize how Africans value life.

The deliberate killing of human life involves excommunication and banishment from the community or he pays dearly with his own life. Suicide is hated with passion; that is why anyone who takes his or her life never receives a befitting burial not to talk of funeral. Even the accidental killing of a kinsman merits exile for a period of time. The only time one can kill officially is during wars though war is generally taken to as last resort. But even at that, if one kills during war, one must perform certain rituals before entering any house. This is done so as to appease the gods. In the same way even the life of an unborn child is highly protected to the extent that pregnant women are not allowed to watch ugly masquerades. As life is respected,

so is everything associated with it.[413] Sap-filled trees are not cut down carelessly among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. It was F.Chidozie Ogbalu who says, "The Udara tree is a sacred tree and symbolises fertility and its beautiful fruits were regarded with such an endearment as if they were actual children."[414] Sex organs are not mentioned anyhow in public, women are not allowed to dress anyhow. One of the flaws in this value is that even in the midst of the sacredness of life, there are some cannibals among Africans. But one thing is certain, no one eats his or her own kinsman or kinswoman. Sometimes, it is like saying that life is sacred when the blood of my kinsman or woman is involved but when that of a foreigner is involved the foreignness makes the blood even sweeter.

Irrespective of this flaw, this is a cherished value that could signify Africans to be the light of the world and salt of the earth. Any Christian who lives according to the above cherished value in Nigeria today could easily be characterized as one fulfilling the demands of Matt 5:13-16. The value is Christian and has quality of community existence for it maintains order in any community. The Church in Nigeria in union with the universal church abhors murder in all its ramifications.

5.4.4. Sense of Religion

Africans are deeply religious to the extent that there are no atheists in African societies. Hence they do not know how to live without religion. This is because religion is part and parcel of their every day existence. Life and religion is a continuum for Africans.[415] The modern man's attitude of

[413] Onwubiko, 22-23.

[414] Chidozie Ogbalu Igbo Institutions and Customs (Onitsha: University Publishers Co, sine datum) 65.

[415] Onwubiko, 24.

compartmentalization of religion is not African. "It (Religion) is an integral and inseparable part of the entre culture. Religion in the African sense was practical. One's entire action is reflective of one's religious concepts and practices as is seen in the ordering of society. This is because social morality is dependent on religion."[416] It is a common parlance that Africans sleep, wake, walk, work, eat, drink, and indeed do everything religiously. The divinities are the custodian of the morality of the community. They see the divinities as very unmerciful whenever one is committing any atrocity and good guards when one lives according to the norms of one's community. The sense of divinity or religion is also a communal value. One's religiosity affects the other and vice versa.

The fact that Africans live and think religiously or that they do not compartmentalize religion is a good quality that has some semblance with Christianity and which portrays clearly the metaphor of "Salt" and "Light" (Matt 5:13, 14). It is in the nature of salt always to be salty no matter where it is placed unless it is not salt. It must necessarily affect the taste of whatever it touches. Salt is salt not only by what it does but also by what it is. In the same way light cannot be hidden, i.e. it will never stop being light. Its nature is to shine and no circumstance can prevent it from shining.

Modern Nigerians are losing sight of the above. Christians seem to have been removed from their culture and planted in another where they are not well grounded. Modern Christians in Nigeria have compartmentalized religion ostensibly to their advantage when in actual fact it is to their disadvantage. They

[416] http:www.emeka.at/African_cultural_values.pdf (retried on 20th Feb. 2010)

cheat their brothers and sisters during the week and on Sunday they appear as saints in the churches. No one would appear like that to the African divinities and goes free in those days. Traditional Africans believe strongly in the Igbo adage which says, "*Ukwu na-aga wan wan, anya n'afu zan zan na afu ya*" (the leg that moves carelessly is seen by the eye that sees carelessly too.) So this sense of religion already prepared Africans for the reception of Christian faith especially on the characterization of the Christians as "Salt" and "Light." This is one of the values that have been lost as a result of wrong methodology in the evangelization of Africans to Christianity as a result of the language and cultural barriers that existed between the evangelizers and the evangelized.

5.4.5. Sense of Justice

Africans so much believe in the following proverbs, "*Onye emegbula nwa muo, nwa muo emegbula nwa mmadu*" (Let no one be wicked to the spirit and let the spirit not to be wicked to the son of man.) Again, "*Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya*" (Let the kite perch, and let eagle perch, anyone who refuses the other to perch, let its wing be destroyed). These are expressions of sense of justice. This has a lot to do with the sense of honesty and sincerity we discussed above. Truth is one. In the communal activities of Africans food, drinks and other materials are shared according to certain order. Even if somebody who is supposed to collect his share before some people is not present for his own share, his must be collected by a close member of his family whenever it comes to his turn. Nobody manipulates and collects shares before anybody he is following behind according to their laid down procedures. Anyone who collects a share before his senior must be levied. The sharers always make effort not to cheat anybody during the sharing. Most often it is the most junior that shares and automatically he will collect last. So if

he makes some big and some small, then, he would be liable to be collecting the small portion every time. The *Nze na Ozo* oversee the justice of a community. Anyone they charge remains charged and anyone they acquit remains acquitted. This sense of justice embraces sense of hospitality for it is the way you receive a visitor that that visitor will receive you in turn anytime you happen to visit him. It is reciprocal.

Africans traditionally do things the way they believe that the gods approve that they must be done. This is because they believe according to their world view that the world of the spirits has great influence over the world of the humans. They believe that the world of the spirit moderates all activities done in the world of the humans. Hence they struggle all the time to be just in their relationship with their fellow human beings lest they incur the wrath of the gods. For instance, every husband, and wife must be faithful to one another and they must carry out their responsibilities towards their children and their children must in turn show them their own responsibilities.[417] Justice ensures symbiotic and mutual relationship to thrive.
When Africans are just in their relationship, they are doing that for their own good. It is always a "give and take" sort of relationship. The whole essence of characterization of the disciples as salt and light is not really for their own good directly but for the glorification of their father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16). If Christians are just to one another, then their saltness and lightness would have been fulfilled to the glory of God. The admonitions of Matthean Jesus in Matt 5:13-16 has been in practice among Africans. It was destroyed and adulterated by modernity and half-knowledge of what

[417] Mbiti, 176.

Christianity is all about. "The faith of the people is very shallow despite the huge numbers in our churches."[418]

5.4.6. Respect for Elders and Authority

Elders have great respect among Africans. "Elders are taken to be the repository of communal wisdom and therefore they are conceded leadership in the affairs of the people. One of the reasons for this is the nearness of the elders to the ancestors."[419] This brings to mind the Igbo proverb, "He who listens to an elder is like one who consults an oracle."[420] "The elders preserve the *ofo* as the Igbo symbol of justice, uprightness, sacredness and truthfulness."[421] In the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples are like elders because they are the people who got first hand information from Jesus. They were nearer to Jesus than the rest of humanity hence, "You are the Salt . . . You are the Light . . ." (Matt 5:13-16). The basic principle, respect for elders and constituted authority make the acceptance of Matt 5:13-16 very possible among Africans. The elders though they are respected they must also respect themselves.

The implication of this is that if salt ceases to be salt, it is rejected and if light ceases to shine it is neglected. If an elder does not respect himself, then the children will treat him with disrespect. It is hard to see among Africans an elder who behaves like a kid or an authority that does not recognize that he is an authority. If one therefore maintains his eldership

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[418] Albert K. Obiefuna Idolatry in a Century Old Faith (Enugu: Secta Pub. 1985) 12.

[419] Onwubiko, 28.

[420] Onwubiko, 28.

[421] Gregory Adibe Igbo Issues: Values, Chi, Akala, Ikenga, Magic, Agwu and Manipulation of Divinities (Onitsha: Mid-Field Publishers Ltd, 2009) 11.

status, he will ever be relevant. This is an unwritten law that guides African elders and those in authority. This is what Matthean Jesus was trying to express when he says, "If salt has lost is taste . . . No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket . . ." (Matt 5:13b, 14).

These values we have enumerated and explained above tell us that the characterization of the disciples in Matt 5:13-16 if applied to Christians in Nigeria are not foreign to Africans what is foreign to Africans today are the deviations from the ideals of the African values that have been thrown overboard. This fact is what Cardinal Peter Turkson emphasizes when he says, "African people face new challenges because of the import of foreign cultural values and practices, including economic policies focused only on profit rather than the common good, and the acceptance of homosexuality and homosexual unions and of divorce and abortion."[422]

If Christians in Nigeria, no matter the ugly context they may be facing today, stick to the practice of the above traditional African values then Jesus' characterization of his disciples would have been for them only a reminder of what they used to know; and never a new doctrine. Otherwise, if they continue to throw the African traditional values overboard, then it would remain a herculean task to fulfil the demands of Matt 5:13-16. Put in another way, the Christianity of any African Christian in general and Nigerian Christian in particular who does not live according to the above discusse frican traditional values is questionable.

[422]Cardinal Peter Turkson "C o Work for Justice and Peace" Synod of Bishops, II Sp Assembly for Africa http://www.catholicnews-tt.net/joomla. Retrieved on 26/4/2010.

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Evaluation of the Work

This study has fully studied Matt 5:13-16 in the context of Christians in Nigeria. We discovered during the course of preparing and writing this book that there has been no single book or article previously written by a biblical scholar devoted to the above text within the Nigerian context. All we could see are general commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew as well as on the Sermon on the Mount either as a whole or in part. This discovery armed us to pursue with vigour the study of this all important text in the gamut of Matthean Gospel.

This study finds out that Christianity in Nigeria has no problem of number in terms of followership. There are very many Christian denominations in Nigeria. As there are several Christian denominations, so are there numerous followers and ministers. During the course of preparing this book, I discovered that majority of Christians in Nigeria are fully aware of the meaning of the metaphors of "Salt" and "Light" as used in the context of Matt 5:13-16 through direct observation. They know that they are Christ's disciples in Nigeria. They are aware that in modern day arrangement one becomes Christ's follower through baptism. It is through baptism that a Christian is called and equipped as "Salt of the Earth" and "Light of the World." They equally know that the characterization of Christians as "Light of the World" and "Salt of the Earth" means that they draw from Christ, their Master,

and the uncreated light of the world such power that cannot but influence the human life and that of the society.[423]

But the country Nigeria where the Christians live and practice their faith has changed and turned away from its traditional values like communalism, honesty and sincerity, respect for life, deep sense of religion, sense of justice, respect for elders and authority and embraced the values alien to them. Such values which they embraced since the country's independence in 1960 include culture of affluence which even culminated in over keeping of corpses in the mortuary (thus death is no longer understood), greed, materialism, double allegiance, bribery and corruption, falsehood, individualism, "if you cannot beat them you join them" syndrome, indecency, elimination or assassination, kidnapping, *Onye nwee ego, onwee umunna* (to have money is to have friends), *Onye ube ruru orachaa* (if one happens to ascend the mantle of leadership no matter how, then it is his turn to fill his pocket), thuggery, political and religious riots, etc. Most often these negative values are praised more than the positive ones. To make the above negative values what almost everybody is aspiring towards, there is serious poverty and hunger in the land. Nigeria nearly has only the very rich and very poor. The middle class is heading dangerously every day towards extinction if not fully extinguished already.

In an attempt for authentic Christians to meet up with the hard economic, social, and political situation in Nigeria, this work finds out that it is hard for them but not impossible for them to fulfil the demands of Matt 5:13-16. It is hard for one to be a

[423]Martin Onyemma Egbuogu. Chistianity and the De-Sacralization of State Power: An Insight into the Theological Basis of Democracy (Enugu-Nigeria: Snaap Press, 2006). Pp 340-9.

Christian in Nigeria and to live according to the demands of Matt 5:13-16. In summary, the Nigerian socio-cultural and political context makes it almost impossible for Christians in Nigeria to truly be salt and light of the Nigerian nation to the glory of God (Matt 5:16). So the problem of Christians in Nigeria does not accrue from lack of understanding of the metaphor of light and salt but on the courage to live it and damn the consequences as result of so many challenges they are facing every day. To live out Matt 5:13-16 in Nigerian context means that one is prepared to live and die in abject poverty or as a nonentity.

I think this is one of the reasons why The Synod of Bishops concluded their deliberations by addressing all the segments of the church (the Catholic Church) on the areas they must contribute so as to bring about reconciliation in the African continent. On their address to the laity in general as a fruit of their reflection on Matt 5:13-14, the laity are reminded anew that they are "Church of God out in the market places of society."[424] This is because it is in and through them that the life and witness of the Church are made visible to the world. The synod Fathers addressed the laity thus: You are ambassadors for Christ. "This requires of you to allow your Christian faith to permeate every aspect and facet of your lives; in the family, at work, in the professions, in politics and public life. This is no easy task. That is why you must assiduously access the means of grace, through prayer, the sacraments."[425] Having seen the handicap of Christians in Nigeria in their response to the demands of the above text within the Nigerian

[424]SYNOD OF BISHOPS, II SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR AFRICA THE CHURCH IN AFRICA IN SERVICE TO RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND PEACE. "You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world" (Mt 5: 13, 14) (Vatican City, 2009) No. 22.

[425] Vatican: African Synod Final Draft, No. 22.

context, let us now proffer some possible solutions that may most likely assist Christians to live according to their vocation of being "Salt" and "Light" of the Nigerian nation in particular and the world as a whole despite the negative influences. This is because it is the sole responsibility of Christians to convert the world and moderate or influence the activities of all and sundry.

6.2. Recommendations

6.2.1 Living Above the Challenges Arising from the Nigerian Nation.

Christians should rise to the challenge of being light and salt in their environment no matter the circumstances bearing in mind that through such a life God would take glory (Matt 5:16). Hence, they are supposed to be aware that to respond to the vocation of being salt and light involves pains; to follow the right direction when everyone is following left direction involves pain. Their insistence on following right direction always no doubt will change the situation to the better.

6.2.2 Redefinition of Discipleship

Disciple translates the Greek word *mathētēs* which stands for "One who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views."[426] It can mean an adherent or one who follows another because of the view the person has. So, disciples are believers, Christians (Acts 11:26), followers of Christ by imitating him in his words and deeds. Matthew's Gospel shapes and forms all (Jews and Gentiles) into community of disciples. It points to a way of life

[426] Frederick William Danker A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000) 609.

which continues Jesus' mission of manifesting God's saving presence in the world.[427] This means they cannot be influenced negatively by the world around them since Christ was not negatively influenced; instead they ought to influence the world around them since Christ did that perfectly. Every Christian is expected to walk in the footsteps and carefully track Jesus' path.[428] Hence "To follow Christ means to imitate his life-for-others in complete-self-abnegation, for to save one's life by any other than God's will is to lose it."[429] This fact is not clear in the minds of some Christians in Nigeria.
Following Jesus according to Matthew's Gospel involves sacrifice. For instance, Peter and Andrew sacrificed their nets, James and John- the sons of Zebedee their boat and their father, Matthew the tax collector his employment (9:9) and followed Jesus. This act of sacrifice enables the disciple to focus more on the daily living of the gospel in the midst of the world.[430] This may not be easy for it will seem like one carrying a mighty cross as Jesus did. To 'take up our cross' is to embrace the consequences of this Christian discipleship, whatever they maybe."[431] Even the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples is more than simply a prayer. "It embodies an entire spirituality of those who wish to follow the Lord."[432]

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[427] Warren Carter "Learning to Live as Faithful Disciples" The Bible Today, 36/5, Sept/Oct 1998, 292.

[428] Babara E. Bowe "Tracking Jesus' Footprints, Disciples: Those who Learn, Who Fail, and Who Follow" The Bible Today, 46/2, March/April 2008, 73.

[429] Eliott C. Maloney "He is Going Before You to Galilee: Discipleship in Mark" The Bible Today 47/1, Jan/Feb. 2009, p. 27.

[430] Bowe 75.

[431] Bowe 77.

[432] Robin Ryan "The Lord's Prayer: A Spirituality of Discipleship" The Bible Today, 46/2 March/ April, 2008, 79.

This view is firmly corroborated by Pope Benedict XVI.[433] This is because this all important prayer called "the Lord's Prayer" shows the total dependence of the disciples on God whom they constantly addressed as "Our Father." So, discipleship means total dependence of the disciples on the one who called them. This is what Christian ministers need to be telling their members every now and then.

The implication of Matt 28:16-20 is that the disciples are meant to lead others and influence others and not vice versa through their contact with their master Jesus. The essence of discipleship for Jesus is to teach those he called for them to teach all nations (5:13-16; 28:19-20).

If Christians are made to understand the true meaning of discipleship then they would be able to live out what they profess every day in the churches. The meaning of various religious articles like scapulars, medals, chaplets, uniform of various kinds they put on as well as the individual saintly names they bear would be clearer to them. This understanding would also help them to bear in mind that Jesus abhors hypocrisy in all its forms. He is not happy with hypocrites (Matt 23:3-4); those who do not follow up words with actions (7:15-27); those who are not humble (23:5-12; 20:20-28); those who neglect justice, mercy and faith (23: 23-24; 5:38-48) and those who reject God's purposes (23:29-39).

The proper understanding of their discipleship will no doubt assist them to know that they must always endure to the end in difficult circumstances (10:22; 24:13) like Jesus they are

[433]Pope Benedict XVI Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration, trans. Adrian Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007) 132.

following. This understanding will also enable them to live as Jesus lived and work as he worked for instance in proclamation and teaching (4:17, 23; 10:1, 8; 28:19).[434] This will mean assuming squarely the exalted position Jesus placed them from the very beginning of his earthly ministry (Matt 5:13-16).

6.2.3 Re-evangelization of the Evangelized:

It is easier to start raising a building from the scratch than converting an old building into a modern construction. In the same way it may not be easy to re-evangelize the evangelized. Jesus did not find it easy at all when he called out his followers from the existing religious order of his day- Judaism. This brought him into serious confrontations with the leaders of the people represented by the Pharisees and Scribes as well as Sadducees and Chief Priests. To be able to form a new community of righteousness, Jesus called out the disciples whom he hoped to transform so that they might transform others. He had the intention of forming them into a new righteousness so that they will assist others on the proper interpretation and application of the Torah.

This idea no doubt infuriated the leaders of the people and brought him into almost open confrontation with them. For instance the Pharisees are offended by Jesus' teachings (15:12; 21:45), the Scribes accuse him of blasphemy (9:3), think evil of him (9:4), they accuse him of casting away demons through the finger of the demons (9:34; 12:24), Jesus was attacked for breaking the Law (12:2; 15:1-2), for eating with sinners and tax collectors (9:11), they looked for signs (12:38), some of their questions are aimed at testing him (16:1; 19:3; 22:15-19, 34-35) they even plotted to get rid of him (12:14; 21:46; 22:15) they fought him even after his death (27: 62-63). In the so-

[434]Carter 289.

called conflict passages which deal with the Law and its interpretation (12:1-14; 15:1-20; 19:3-9; 22:34-40, 41-46) it was also the Pharisees who acted as Jesus' major contenders though in 15:1-20 they act in concert with the Scribes.

This no doubt is the reason why Jesus sent his disciples on a mission with the caveat: "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (10:16). Jesus and his disciples never found it easy to evangelize the Jews from Judaism to the advanced new righteousness. Jesus paid dearly with his own blood in an attempt to bring about the new righteousness as well as some of his disciples.

The above circumstances no doubt will play itself out if anyone tries to re-evangelize the evangelized Christians in Nigeria today or to correct a relapsed Christian. Also, anyone who tries to live as the "Salt" and "Light" among present crop of Christians in Nigeria as well as among Nigerians is liable to face numerous oppositions and most especially hardship in its highest realm. But despite all odds the re-evangelization of the evangelized is the best alternative for the Christians in Nigeria to live according to the mind of Jesus in Matt 5:13-16. Those who struggle to live out the new righteousness among Christians in Nigeria and Nigerians will face oppositions even from the present day ministers of the church as well as from the leaders of the country. Something is already going on now in some places today. When I started gathering materials for this work, I was particularly touched by what I discovered in one of our Archdioceses. I saw one Rev. Fr. Victor; a priest of one of the Archdiocese in Nigeria who is even more worried about the Christianity of Christians in Nigeria than the present writer. For Fr Victor, Christians in Nigeria have missed the road (both lay members and their ministers). Hence, there is

every need for evangelization to start afresh. He has started in his own little way to create awareness among the ordained by organizing awareness meetings with some priests who accepted to be part of this change every Thursday. They used to start with Holy Mass, discuss their priesthood and how they affect the people of God, and they conclude with adoration. This priest is working presently in his own home town because his people could no longer accommodate a priest whom they alleged that embezzled their money as well as carting away building materials meant for the building of the new father's house.

This re-evangelization could be achieved through proper catechesis which must be planed with the following as its content: the Life, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in relation to the Sermon on the Mount with particular reference to Matt 5:13-16. This is because, common knowledge tells us that faith is a gratuitous gift from God and it has to be nurtured otherwise it is liable to grow into atrophy. Most of the Christians in Nigeria today received their faith as infants but this faith that was given to them on trust with parents and godparents promising to nurture it and keep the light of faith burning continually seem to have been abandoned.

Since Government takeover of schools in Nigeria, moral instructions that would have helped to re-enact continually the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus the founder of Christianity has been thrown to the winds. Even some schools still owned by the churches are not even exemplary as regards their output. Again, in the Catholic Church, in most urban and rural parishes, Sunday evening instructions are no longer taken seriously even when it is taken serious, very few people use to turn up maybe because they see it as being superfluous.

There is also nothing like follow-up of catechesis after the reception of any of the sacraments. For instance, anyone who receives the First Holy Communion and the sacrament of Confirmation feels most often that one has finished with catechism classes or instructions at that moment. The person would only frequent the church again when the time for the reception of the sacrament of matrimony comes. For some, marriage instruction is their final preparation for their graduation in faith. Unfortunately, most often this is done hurriedly and even sometimes taught by those without the requisite qualifications. Once they receive the sacrament of matrimony, they feel that there is no need again for any catechism.

It is a fact that people turn away from what they are being reminded of everyday how much more of things that they are rarely reminded of. A good example is the disciples of Jesus himself. Jesus warned them of the danger of money (Matt 6:24-33), yet it was one of the disciples, Judas, who betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver (Matt 26: 14-16). Furthermore, despite the warning that temptation was around the corner and that the only remedy for one to remain victorious from its grips is prayer, yet the disciples who heard all that slept under the shadow of the cross (Matt 26:36-46) hence they abandoned Jesus when the temptation came, when they would have defended what they believed in (Matt 26:56). These children who are not receiving moral formation in schools as well as in the churches are left to emulate people around them especially the politicians who have taken as a. la mode words without appropriate actions which we know as empty hypocrisy (Matt 7:24-27; 12:46-50).

For the proper re-evangelization of the evangelized, this book therefore suggests the following:

- Sunday Evening instruction must be taken seriously by all Christian churches. This will involve both the young and old. The youth will be divided into three main groups namely, children who have not received the first holy communion (the Prayer Group); those who have received the first holy communion (the Eucharist Group); and those who have been confirmed in the faith (Soldiers of Christ Group). Adults will be divided into two main groups, namely, those who have wedded in the church (Christian Adult Group), those who have not wedded in the church (Extraordinary Christian Group). These groups could be divided further depending on the availability of manpower. It must be the duty of the chief catechist of every parish to select helpers who will assist him to handle these various groups.

- Moral Instruction based on the Sermon on the Mount must be given a prominent position in both public and private schools and must be made also one of the papers that should be taken in WAEC and NECO Examinations as well as to be made compulsory for students for their admittance into any of the Nigerian tertiary institutions. It must be made to be handled by experts in religion and not just anybody. At the end of the day, instead of admitting any candidate into any of the universities with Five Credits including English and Mathematics, it will be Six Credits including English, Mathematics and Moral Instruction.

- Parents have the responsibility of grounding the faith of their children at home especially teaching them that there is God in heaven who created them, cares for them and sees them. It is their responsibility to teach

their children the traditional values like respect for elders, and life. This is why this book proposed above that pre-marriage instruction as well as Sunday evening instruction should be taken seriously. It is their duty at home to teach their children the virtue of humility, sincerity, honesty, attitude towards material possessions and a host of others. If these three things are done, they may lead to the proper formation of Christian conscience and thus living according to the demands of Matt 5:13-16 will be assured.

6.2.4. Greed Should be Abhorred.

In order that greed may be reduced in the society, Christians should be encouraged to be contented with their income for their various needs and thus planning their lives accordingly. It is a fact that human needs are insatiable and if that being the case, they must be contented with whatever they have as salaries and live accordingly.

6.2.5. Proper Scrutiny and Formation of the Candidates that Aspire to Become Christian Ministers.

Let us use Catholic Church as an example here. In recent times we have noticed that vocation to the Sacred Priesthood which seemed previously to be the sole work of the Holy Spirit has suddenly turned to be within the realm of human selection depending on the locality one who claims to have vocation is coming from. Vocation has suddenly been associated with ethnic nationality especially in urban dioceses like Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and others. Even when one succeeds in becoming a priest in a diocese outside his homeland, he is not recognized in certain important appointments because of the "son of the soil syndrome." In modern way of looking at things now, one outside his home diocese rarely hopes to become the chief shepherd of the

diocese unless certain unimaginable happens.[435] The ideal that goes with the candidates for catholic priesthood states: "Though intelligence and other qualities are important and desirable what is emphasized is the good moral disposition, the readiness and ability to accept, believe and preach what one believes."[436] Some aspect of this fact is unknowingly being gradually played down today. Intelligence is most often emphasized to the detriment of all others. This is to the extent that today we have priests that cause more harm than good.

To avoid the above ugly situation, ethnicism should be avoided in all its ramifications in the selection of the candidates who would become Christian ministers. Before any candidate is admitted into the seminary or convent, or house of formation not only that the person must pass the required examinations, he or she must have shown clear signs of religious inclination. Every question which the would be minister shall be asked should be based on the Sermon on the Mount.

Again, both junior and senior seminarians must be signing pastoral reports from their home parish priests as well as from the parish priests on whose territory they must have spent their holidays. This implies close monitoring. Any candidate that seems to manoeuvre the process should be expelled from the seminary on time irrespective of where the person is coming from. Today, as regards the care of seminarians on holidays, no minister seems to be interested again.

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[435]The present writer was constantly reminded in those days as a seminarian to go back to his home diocese less he be frustrated in future in the form of expulsion from the seminary. This really made him to go back to his home diocese at that early stage in his formation.

[436] Anozie Onyema, The Igbo Culture and The Formation of Conscience (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 1999) 160.

Furthermore, every bishop knows at least 70% of his priests, seminary formators should be chosen from among the best candidates so that they can mould their own qualities into the young minds that are entering the priesthood otherwise what Jesus fought against in Matt 23:1-12 will continue to rear their ugly heads.

Presently, because wrong candidates are posted to form future priests, they go there and divide themselves into provinces and dioceses. This is to the extent that each formator makes sure that the interest of candidates that are from his province or diocese is protected. Whether they are doing fine or not they are given opportunity to stay and those that are not from their diocese or province are those that would be weeded out at the least provocation. This should be checked seriously if we are hoping to have those who would be the light and salt of the society.

6.2.6 Proper Scrutiny of the Candidates that Aspire to be Honoured in the Church

Knighthood has turned into a great means of compensating the great contributors of the church or future contributors. In the modern times it is no longer reserved for those whose lifestyle is impeccable and exemplary but for anyone who desires it and has the money. In most situations it is given to the highest bidders[437] who sometimes turn round to fight the church. Taddeo Onoyima says that in the opinion of some people, "It is better to wipe out the word knight from Christianity which propagates good life, uprightness, and sanctity. They see the knighthood as a disgrace in the church."[438] Onoyima did not

[437] Taddeo Onoyima The Catholic Knighthood, An Experience (Enugu: Snaap Press, 1993) 12.

[438] Onoyima, 10.

find the above assertions funny. He vehemently refuted that by claiming that there are bad eggs in every society even among the apostles. No one had in the past because of Judas condemn the whole apostles and rarely do people make reference to the total abandonment of the apostles when their master needed their nearness as the reason why they should be rejected as models.[439] Despite the above argument, there is element of truth in what people are saying. All is not well. It is true that bans are published before anyone is accepted to be a knight. But we know the level of fear in our society, who will expose the crime of the powerful? To do that will be tantamount to losing one's life. Hence evil is allowed to thrive because good people have refused to oppose what ought to be opposed; or because there are very few people who are responding as "Salt" and "Light" among Christians today. The truth is that so many knights of the church have really scandalized a lot of people and that is why some people are not happy with them.[440] "Light" and "Salt" in the true sense of the word have no alternative than to live according to their very nature, in the same way a knight should not have any reason not to live as the light and salt of the society.

This book suggests that before anyone is accepted into the knighthood there must be recommendations from ones family circle, where one works, and from the religious society he belongs to in the church. This scrutiny must be done properly. The candidate for the knighthood must has been outstanding in the church. Finally, he must has been well known to his parish priest.

[439] Onoyima, 14-22.

[440] Edo Ugbagwu, Eric Ikhilae and Joseph Jibueze "Electoral Umpire Nigeria Needs" The Nation 5/1370 (April 20, 2010) 43-45.

Furthermore, the *Ezinnes* among the CWO is nothing but a way of raising fund for the CWO and never a way of setting aside people who are honourable and admirable so that they can assist others to grow through their exemplary lives to the glory of God (Matt 5:16). Instead this honour is mostly given to mothers and wives of the rich; one rarely sees the mothers and wives of the poor among them.

This book suggests that this honour should be reserved to special mothers in the church who have remained faithful in their faith despite all odds and those who are foremost in activities of the church according to the demands of Matt 5:13-16, if at all it should be retained. It should be reserved to mothers who have trained their children properly and who are living out their faith to the admiration of all. It should be reserved for women who are in good communion with their husbands and their husbands also good Christians. It would be most encouraging if they are drawn from the pious societies in the church. The essence would be to encourage those who are making effort and stand them out for others to see. So before one is allowed to become knight, to take special title among the CWO then the person's intention must be properly examined even to the extent of checking the faith of the children of the would be knight and special mother.

Learning from Igbo social institution called Ozo title. Ozo title among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria is not given to anybody in those days. One must have reached certain position in the society before one is considered at all. Talking about the candidates for the Ozo title, Anozie Onyema says, "What qualifies one to be accepted as an incumbent candidate is one's probity of character."[441] Everything about you must be put into

[441] Onoyima, 160.

consideration including how you made your wealth, the stability of your children in following after your footstep. There is no denying the fact that today, the influence of society has also bastardized Ozo title taking to the extent that it goes to the highest bidders and to even criminals that are well known in the community. The implication of this is that what is happening in the church is also what is happening in the society. This is possible only in a society that honours wealth without minding how it was made. Unless there is revolution in the thought and morality of Christians in Nigeria, things will continue to go wrong and unless Christians stand up tomorrow to take their vocation of being the "Salt" and "Light" seriously things will continue the way it is and people will continue to question the Christianity of Christians.

6.2.7 Christians Aspiring to Political Leadership must be Properly Scrutinized.

Whoever must assume any political office must be investigated by a group of leaders of the church as was done in Anambra state without being partisan. Before the 2003 general election, the priests of the three dioceses of Anambra state sat together to probe into the credentials and personalities of the various candidates that wanted to rule the state. At the end of the day, they exposed the credentials of the various candidates to their followers and encouraged them to vote according to their consciences. The same thing happened before the Feb. 6 election of 2010. They encouraged their parishioners to vote for truth, honesty, and sincerity. As a result of these probes into the private lives of individuals that aspire to political leadership, Anambra state is better for it in terms of crop of leaderships that were enthroned. If all the states in Nigeria should have the same alliance and cordiality -speaking with one voice then together corruption could be wiped out and thus

the challenges facing Christians in Nigeria as it affects Matt 5: 13-16 would be greatly reduced.

6.2.8 Salt and Light as Sacramental

Since Christians in Nigeria are fully aware of the meaning of the metaphor of salt and light, what they need is for these elements to be presented to them every day so that they would be constantly reminded of Jesus' statement in Matt 5:13-16. The use of salt and light as sacramental by all Christians should be re-enacted and emphasized anew. Apart from using salt and light during the reception of the sacraments like Baptism, confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Matrimony and Holy Order, they should also be kept at a conspicuous position in any Christian assembly.

Apart from giving light to the candidates for the baptism, the candidates would be made to taste little salt to remind him or her he or she ought to be to the world around him or her. I should also be given to candidates after the reception of the First Holy Communion as well as after the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This should be administered to the candidates after the post communion prayer. After giving penance to a penitent, salt should be given to him to remind him/her anew what Christ expects him/her to be. In the same vein during marriage ceremony, after the exchange of ring as a sigh of fidelity, the couple should be made to give each other salt and light which supposed to remind them what they are to be first of all to one another as well as to the environment around them. Finally, during ordinations, candidates for the ordination should be given salt after post communion prayer on the day of the ordination to remind them what they are supposed to be for the world around them. Also religious during their final professions should be given salt and light to remind of their responsibility first to their immediate community and to the world.

Again, at the entrance to the church and at any gathering where Christians are supposed to gather, a plate or container of salt and bright torchlight should be placed at the door posts, one at the left and the other at the right, so that whoever that enters into the assembly touches it to remind himself or herself what he is called to be to the world. Sequel to that, just as almost every family today tends towards having altar for family prayers each family is supposed to have salt and light always kept at their family altars and which each members of the family must touch before going to bed in the night and before leaving the house in the morning to remind them of their vocation. In the seminaries and convents as well as other such institutions of the church, such should be given a prominent position especially in the refectory. In fact salt and light should be made a universal symbol for all Christians. In the Christendom, almost all denominations have different materials for their communion; "Salt and Light" could be the universal symbols for all Christians especially for Christians in Nigeria. Just as we said above, "salt" and "light" should be placed at a place where anybody going inside or out of the church must see and touch them. This will constantly be reminding them of what Christ said that they are supposed to be for the world. Hence it will be a challenge for them to live accordingly in their various professions and vocations.

6.2.9 Salt and Light (Matt 5:13, 14) as Means for the Exchange of Pleasantries

Just like a parish in building has already started that in the diocese of Port Harcourt, every Christian should be encouraged to be greeting one another with phrases that contain salt and light. For example, the first person says: **"You are the salt of the earth!"** (v 13). The other replies: **"You are the light of the world!"** (v 14). This will follow other traditional Christian greetings as each denomination shall deem feet. For example

the first person in addition to the above says: **"Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ both now and forever."** The respondent says: **"Amen."** or **"Praise God!"** The respondent says: **"Alleluia!"** This will no doubt has the same effect on the respondent(s) as it was on the disciples when they first heard it. Since, the Christian must be the cleansing antiseptic in any society in which the Christian happens to be or in any profession or vocation he might be; he must be the person who by his presence overcomes corruption and makes it easier for others to be good. Hence, a Christian that is not exemplary is not a Christian. Anambra State of Nigeria has her sobriquet as "The Light of the Nation" and Abonyi State of Nigeria has her own as "The Salt of the Nation." These two states are the most developed among all the Eastern states if not among the whole states of Nigeria. Their road networks are second to none.

6.3. Conclusion:

Having gone this far, let us now summarize the discoveries we have made in the contextual exegesis of Matt 5:13-16 within the context of Christians in Nigeria. In the exegesis of the above text we discovered that Jesus' characterization of his followers as the "Salt of the Earth" and the "Light of the World" implies that they must add flavour to the day-to-day life of the earth as well as show the right way in the day-to-day activities of the world. This must be done so that their father who is in heave will be glorified (Matt 5:16). To be salt and light means that Christians are to focus on the daily living of the demands of the Sermon on the Mount in the midst of the world. It means reordering of priorities, reassessing plans and goals, recommitting oneself to the gospel values.

The descriptive affirmation of Matt 5:13, 14 is not a question of individualism but communalism. It means, though, the disciples are made up of different individuals; the type of

signal coming from them must necessarily be the same. What one does in certain situation should be what the other does in the same situation. So this is a symbol not of conspicuous individual but of the collective impact of a whole community. "It is the collective light of a whole community which draws the attention of the watching world."[442] "Let your light shine before people," and the reason for letting your light shine before people is for them to see your good works and thus glorify your father who is in heaven. Disciples, who are the light, cannot pass unnoticed; and disciples who say the truth no matter whose horse is being gored would always be a reference point in the minds of other people. Through their actions, then, they shine on people as light which makes everything inhuman in them perfectly visible and intelligible.

It is in the nature of salt to be salt all the time; hence there is no break in the saltness of a salt. Again, light is always light and there is no break in the lightness of light. If Christians, therefore, are characterized as salt and light, they must be salt and light to their environment every now and then. There is no break in the Christianity of a Christian. A Christian remains a Christian in any profession he sees himself in as well as in any environment he sees himself. A Christian who lives like every other human in the face of corruption is not a Christian!!!

Since our text is silent on how to become salt and light of the world, we conclude that one becomes a salt and light right from baptism. This is because it is only baptism that makes one a Christian and a follower of Christ. We equally surmise that Jesus did not ask his followers to abhor any profession but that they are expected to permeate all professions or vocations

[442] France 171.

in the world with the spirit of being a follower of Christ. The implication is that if Christians were to see themselves in different professions and they are true to their vocation of being salt and light then there is no doubt that they will transform those professions and vocations.

My interaction with people of God as a minister revealed that the demands of Matt 5:13-16 are very hard though not impossible to be practiced by Christians in Nigeria when one puts the challenges emanating from the Nigerian Christian context into consideration. To follow Christ means to imitate his life-for-others in complete self abnegation. It means standing on the right all the time even when it is against you. The difficulty of living out Matt 5:13-16 is self evident when one considers the social, economic, religious and political situations of the Nigerian nation. It would have been easier for Christians to practice the demands of Matt 5:13-16 but Nigerian Christian context makes it almost impossible for the majority.

Through many trainings I have received as a Catholic minister and through many travels I have undertaken both within and outside Nigeria, I was able to discover that there are very many Christian denominations in Nigeria, what they lack individually is the courage and commitment to remain steadfast no matter the odds. Some cry wolf when corruption is taking the upper hand and the majority of those who cry wolf do that when they discover that the outcome of the corruption will not favour them directly, others will keep quiet when they are benefiting from the corruption. I discovered also that Christians rise up more to the demands of their vocation when they gather together as a group and not as individuals. Most Christians prefer condemning corruption as a group to as individuals. Majority of Christians in Nigeria know what is

right and wrong and it is only very few of them that could claim ignorance of the demands of Matt 5:13-16. Where the main problem lies as we have stated over and over again is on the **"Will"** to live as demanded. We must be convinced that this responsibility must be carried out and that the mind of Christ in giving us this task must be fulfilled. We must struggle to be true Christians the seven days of the week as well as in the twelve months of the year. This has to be lived out in our speech, in our dealings with others, in our family life and in our offices or places of work. Thus, that name that started in Antioch (Christians) several years ago will be more meaningful in our own time. The advantage is that people outside Christendom would see Christians as people who have something noble and sensible in them, people who are concerned with the things that really matter (making the world a better place), people who have inward peace and sense of security. Then they (non Christians) will move to get these qualities for themselves.

This book suggests numerous remedies of which if applied properly they will go a long way in strengthening the Christians' response to the demands of Matt 5:13-16 in Nigeria. They will go a long way to wipe out the negative values that have replaced and overshadowed the highly esteemed African values. On the whole, this book discovered that this text (Matt 5:13-16) is only what Christians in Nigeria need to imbibe in the depth of their being and then be able to change the face of the Nigerian nation. Few have started but not yet enough. If all should imbibe the spirit of this text in their being, then, no one will have the courage and audacity to query the Christianity of Christians. The implication is that Nigeria will be filled with authentic Christians and the result would be obvious.

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